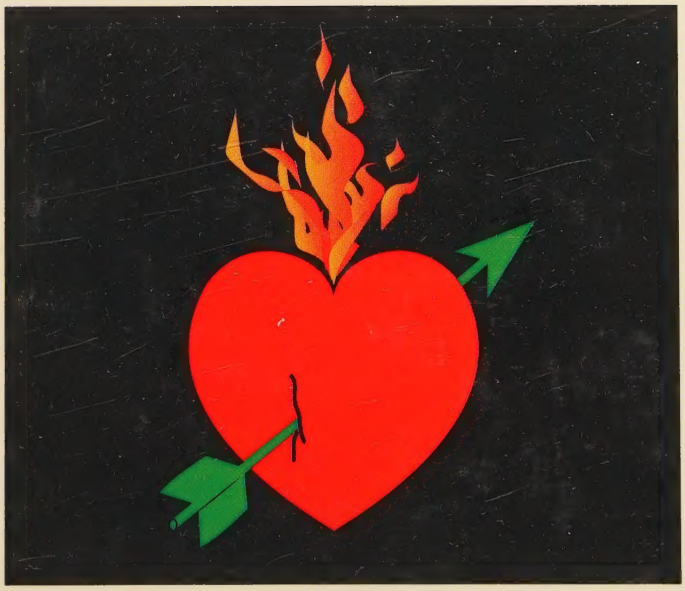
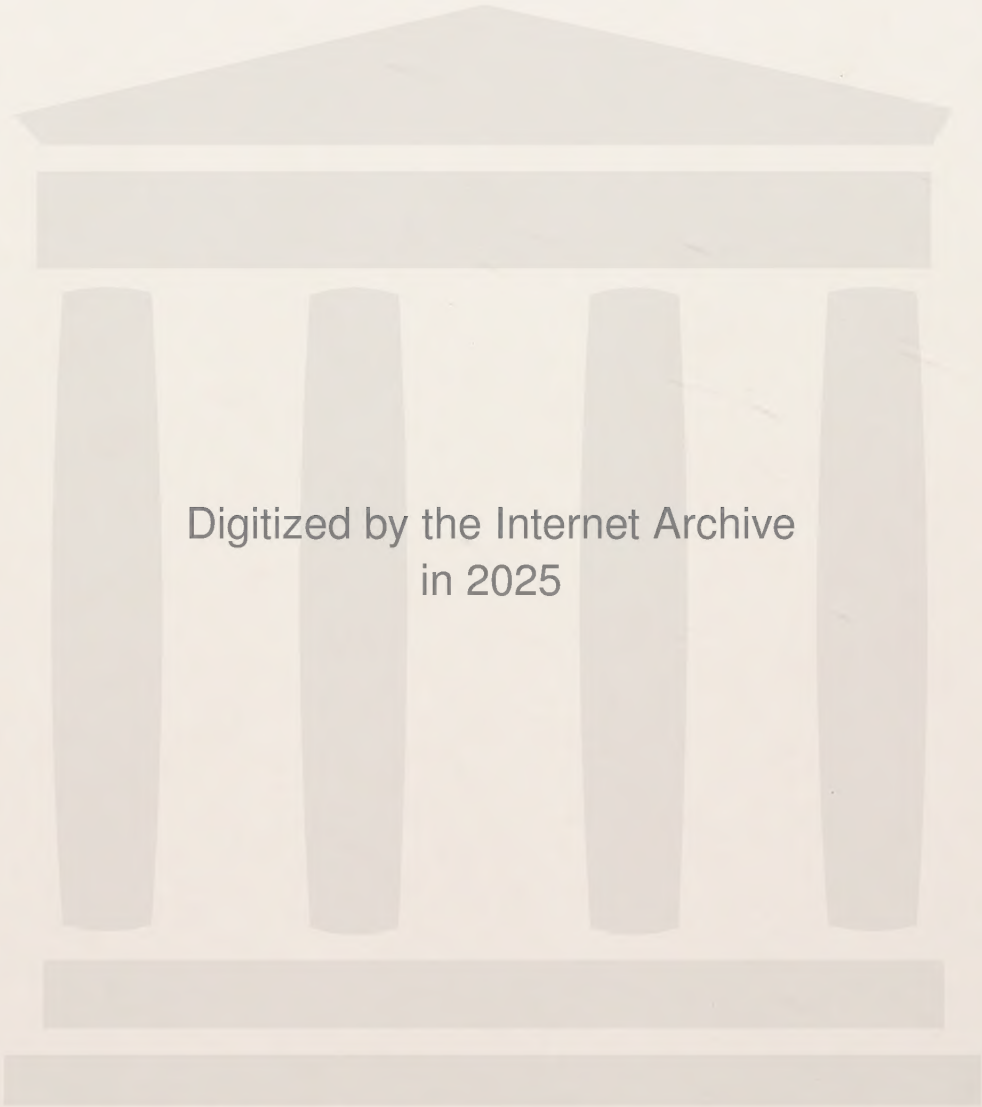
GATEWAY SEMINARY-BAY AREA
3 0008 00018 0411

Theological Works of Thomas Paine (1882)



Thomas Paine
Calvin Blanchard


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/theologicalworks0000thom_c9y3

DATE DUE

Demco, Inc. 38-293

GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY LIBRARY

THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

THOMAS PAINE,

THE AGE OF REASON, EXAMINATION OF PROPHECIES, REPLY TO THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF, LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE, ESSAY ON DREAMS. LETTER TO CAMILLE JORDAN, AND SEVERAL OTHER ESSAYS AND LECTURES.

THE WHOLE PRECEDED BY

A LIFE OF PAINE, BY CALVIN BLANCHARD.

CHICAGO:
BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.,
ST. LOUIS:
BELFORD & CLARKE PUBLISHING CO.,
MDCCCLXXXII.

GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY LIBRARY

BL
2735
.A35
1882

KESSINGER PUBLISHING'S

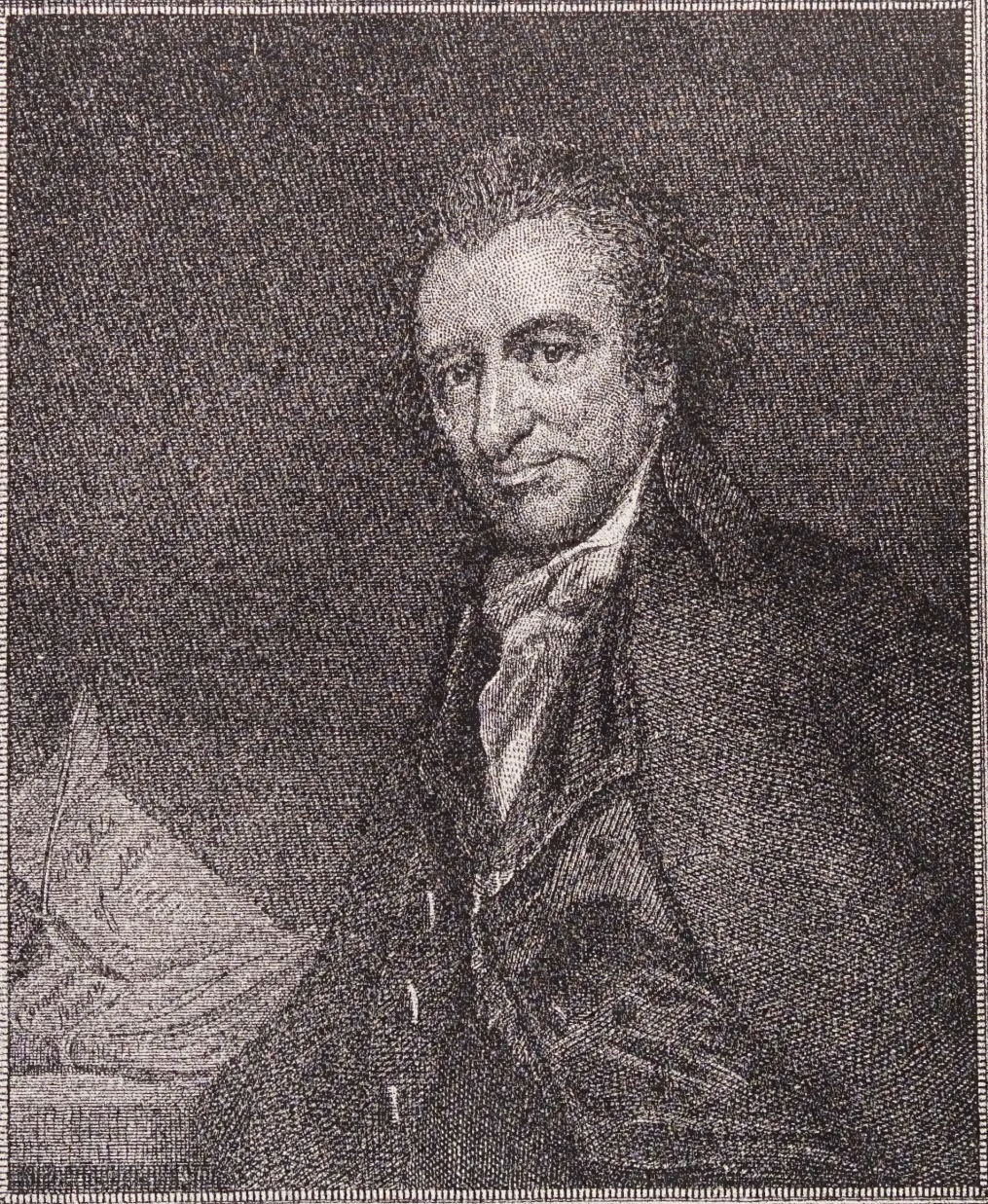
RARE MYSTICAL REPRINTS

THOUSANDS OF SCARCE BOOKS
ON THESE AND OTHER SUBJECTS:

Freemasonry * Akashic * Alchemy * Alternative Health * Ancient Civilizations * Anthroposophy * Astrology * Astronomy * Aura * Bible Study * Cabalah * Cartomancy * Chakras * Clairvoyance * Comparative Religions * Divination * Druids * Eastern Thought * Egyptology * Esoterism * Essenes * Etheric * ESP * Gnosticism * Great White Brotherhood * Hermetics * Kabalah * Karma * Knights Templar * Kundalini * Magic * Meditation * Mediumship * Mesmerism * Metaphysics * Mithraism * Mystery Schools * Mysticism * Mythology * Numerology * Occultism * Palmistry * Pantheism * Parapsychology * Philosophy * Prosperity * Psychokinesis * Psychology * Pyramids * Qabalah * Reincarnation * Rosicrucian * Sacred Geometry * Secret Rituals * Secret Societies * Spiritism * Symbolism * Tarot * Telepathy * Theosophy * Transcendentalism * Upanishads * Vedanta * Wisdom * Yoga * *Plus Much More!*

DOWNLOAD A FREE CATALOG
AND
SEARCH OUR TITLES AT:

www.kessinger.net



E. BROWN & CO. - CHI.

THOMAS PAINE.

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.
PUBLISHERS.

PRINTED AND BOUND BY
DONOHUE & HENNEBERRY,
CHICAGO.

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE.

INTRODUCTION.

A FULL and impartial history of THOMAS PAINE alone can supply that, the omission of which falsifies every work pretending to give an account of the war for the national independence of the United States.

The American Revolution of 1776, of which THOMAS PAINE was the author-hero, was the prelude to that far more sanguinary struggle against oppression and wrong which overturned, or irreparably shook, every throne in Western Europe; including, in the category, even the chair of St. Peter; and of which struggle the most prominent author-hero was JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

This is generally understood. But a truth incalculably more important has hitherto been either wholly overlooked, or but glimmeringly perceived; it is this:—Both the American and French Revolutions were but prominent incidents, or *crisis-stages*, in the irrepressible struggle for human rights which commenced when nature implanted in her highest organism, man, that instinct which points to the goal of *development*; that unconquerable desire for *perfect* and *sufficiently-lasting* or "eternal" happiness, which indicates the *common aim* and *attainable end* of science, of art, and of *all* natural, materialistic, or *intelligible* activities:—that thirst for li[illegible]y which can be satisfied by nothing short of *the* revolution which will *remove all constraint*—which will *accomplish* revolution—and

thus justify LUTHER, ROUSSEAU, PAINE, FOURIER, and all other revolutionists. Of this crowning revolution, the text-book is "*The Positive Philosophy*" of AUGUSTE COMTE.

Had Thomas Paine been seconded as valiantly when he made priestcraft howl, as he was when he hurled defiance against kings, despotism by this time would *really*, instead of only nominally, have lain as low as did its minions at Trenton and Yorktown. The land over which the star-spangled banner waves would not have become the prey of corrupt, spoil-seeking demagogues, nor would Europe now tremble at the nod of a military dictator.

Not but that priestcraft itself has a substructure, *all but* "supernaturally" profound, which must be sapped before justice can be more than a mockery, freedom aught but a mere abstraction, or happiness little else than an *ignis fatuus*. But man should have continued the great battle for his rights when the soldiers and author-heroes of liberty were in the full flush of victory; instead of making that vain, mischievous and ridiculous *(except as provisional)* compromise with the human inclinations, called duty; and falling back on that miserable armistice between the wretched poor and the unhappy rich, for the conditions of which, consult that refinement of treachery, misnamed a *constitution*, and that opaque entanglement, absurdly entitled *law*. Can right *be done* and peace be *maintained*, under institutions whose ultimatum is to give half a breakfast to the million, and half a million or so to the balance of mankind, conditioned on such anxiety on the part of the latter, lest they be added to the million before dinner-time, that dyspepsia, rather than nutrition, "waits on appetite?" Is man *irremediably* doomed to a condition which, at shorter and

shorter intervals, forces him to seek relief in one of those saturnalias of carnage and devastation which throws progress aback, menaces civilization even, and yet but partially and temporarily mitigates human ills? Is this the whole sum, substance and end of revolution? It appears to me, that they who believe this, and who admire and commend Thomas Paine from *their* stand-point, dishonor his memory far more than his professed enemies do or can.

But to enable all to understandingly form their own conclusions, I shall give all the essential facts with respect to the history before us, with which a long and careful search, under most favourable circumstances, has made me acquainted. For, *let facts be fairly stated, and truth be fully known,* is the correlate of the proposition (the correctness of which I demonstrated in a former work "*The Religion of Science*") that nature, simple, scientific and artistic, will prove all-sufficient; and neither needs, nor admits the possibility of, a superior: that man, therefore, requires nothing more than what nature is capable of being developed into producing; nor can he know aught beyond nature, or form what can intelligibly be called an idea of any happiness or good, superior to that which, by means of the substantial, including of course, man himself, can be procured.

There needs but to have the light of truth shine fully upon the *real* character of Thomas Paine, to prove him to have been a far greater man than his most ardent admirers have hitherto given him credit for being. Paine's history is so intimately connected with that of progress, both before and since his time, that it will necessarily embrace a very wide range of liberal information.

I am not unmindful that there have been hundreds, perhaps thousands of author-heroes and heroines. Bacon, Locke, Luther, Voltaire,* Fourier, and Robert Owen were prominently of the former, and Mary Wollstonecraft and Frances Wright were decidedly among the latter. But it appears to me, that none of their writings have been *quite* such text-books of revolution, as those of Rousseau and Paine *were*, and those of Comte *now are*.

---

* Schlosser, in his "*History of the Eighteenth Century*," whilst speaking of Voltaire, Shaftesbury, and "the numerous deists who were reproachfully called atheists," says, that they "wielded the weapons" which Locke "had forged."

LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE.

PERIOD FIRST.

1737—1774.

FROM MR. PAINE'S BIRTH TO HIS ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

THOMAS PAINE was born in Thetford, Norfolk county, England, on the 29th of January, 1737.

His father was a member of the society of Friends, and a staymaker by trade; his mother professed the faith of the Church of England.

At the age of about thirteen years, he left the common school, in which, in addition to the branches of education usually taught therein, he had learned the rudiments of Latin, and went to work with his father. But his school teacher, who had been chaplain on board a man-of-war, had infused into his young and ardent mind such an enthusiasm for the naval service, that after reluctantly toiling about three years at his not very lucrative or promising calling, he left home, evidently resolved to "seek the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth," and to pursue his fortune through such chances as the war then imminent between his country and France, might offer.

Dreadful must have been the conflict between his compassionate nature and his necessities and ambition. Arrived in London, without friends or money, he, nevertheless, strove by every means in his power to settle himself honorably in the world, without embracing the dreadful profession he had been both constituted and educated to look upon with horror: he even hesitated so far as to return to his old occupation.

After working a few weeks for Mr. Morris, in Hanover street, Long Acre, he went to Dover, where he also worked a short time for a Mr. Grace.

War between England and France had now been declared; our hero was in all the buoyancy of youth, being not yet seventeen years old; fortune and glory were possible on the one hand, poverty and toil inevitable on the other.

War is murder, 'tis true; murder, all the more heinous for being gloried in; murder, all the more abominable for the magnificence of the scale on which it is perpetrated; murder, which touches the lowest depths of cowardice, in being carried on by vast armies and immense fleets, instead of by smaller and bolder gangs of pirates, and by more venturesome banditti. But its infernal craft would sail, and its death-dealing cannon be manned, equally with or without him; and the place which he refused would be taken, probably by some one with far less tenderness for a wounded or surrendered foe.

On board the privateer "Terrible," Captain Death, enlisted, probably in the capacity of a sailor or marine, the man who was afterwards the soul of a revolution which extended elective government over the most fertile portion of the globe, including an area more than twenty times larger than that of Great Britain, and who had the unprecedented honor to be called, though a foreigner, to the legislative councils of the foremost nation in the world.

For some unexplained cause, Paine left the "Terrible" almost immediately, and shipped on board the "King of Prussia." But the affectionate remonstrances of his father soon induced him to quit privateering altogether.

In the year 1759, he settled at Sandwich, as a master stay-maker. There he became acquainted with a young woman of considerable personal attractions, whose name was Mary Lambert, to whom he was married about the end of the same year.

His success in business not answering his expectations, he, in the year 1760, removed to Margate. Here his wife died.

From Margate he went to London; thence back again to his native town; where, through the influence of Mr. Cocksedge, the recorder, he, towards the end of 1763, obtained a situation in the excise.

Under the pretext of some trifling fault, but really, as there is every reason for supposing, because he was too conscientious to connive at the villainies which were practiced by both his superiors and his compeers in office, he was dismissed from his situation in little more than a year. It has never been publicly stated for what it was pretended that he was dismissed; and

the fact that he was recalled in eleven months thereafter, shows that whatever the charge against him was, it was not substantiated, nor probably, a very grave one. That the British government, in its subsequent efforts to destroy his character, never made any handle of this affair, is conclusive in his favor.

During his suspension from the excise, he repaired to London, where he became a teacher in an academy kept by Mr. Noble of Goodman's Fields; and during his leisure hours he applied himself to the study of astronomy and natural philosophy. He availed himself of the advantages which the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson afforded, and made the acquaintance of Dr. Bevis, an able astranomer of the Royal Society.

On his re-appointment to the excise, Paine returned to Thetford, where he continued till the spring of 1768, when the duties of his office called him to Lewes, in Sussex. There he boarded in the family of Mr. Ollive, tobacconist; but at the end of about twelve months, the latter died. Paine succeeded him in business, and in the year 1771, married his daughter.

In 1772, he wrote a small pamphlet entitled "The Case of the Excise Officers." Although this was specially intended to cover the case of a very ill-paid class of government officers, it was remarkably clear and concise, showing that the only way to make people honest, is to relieve them from the necessity of being otherwise.

This pamphlet excited both the alarm and hatred of his superiors in office, who were living in luxury and ease, and who, besides getting nearly all the pay for doing hardly any of the work, were becoming rich by smuggling, which their positions enabled them to carry on almost with impunity. They spared no pains to pick some flaw in the character or conduct of the author of their uneasiness, but could find nothing of which to accuse him, except that he kept a tobacconist's shop; this however, under the circumstances, was sufficient, and the most honest, if not the only conscientious exciseman in all England, was finally dismissed, in April, 1774.

Paine associated with, and was highly respected by the best society in Lewes, although so poor, that in a month after his dismissal from office, his goods had to be sold to pay his debts; a very strong proof that he had never abused his official trust.

I have twice already so far violated my own taste, to please that of others, as to mention that the subject of these memoirs

had been married. But I cannot consent to meddle further with, and assist the public to peer into affairs with which none but the parties immediately concerned have any business, except under protest. Therefore, I do now most solemnly protest, that I feel more guilty, more ashamed, and more as though I ought to have my nose rung, for writing anything at all about Mr. and Mrs. Paine's sexual affairs, than I should, were I to enter into a serious inquiry respecting the manner in which they performed *any* of their natural functions. Still, reader you may be sure of my fidelity; you need not suspect that I'm going to suppress any of the facts, for if I undertake to do a thing, I'll carry it through, if it's ever so mean.

To begin, then:—

In the flowery month of May, exactly one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four years after Jehovah had been presented with a son by a woman whom he *never, not even subsequently* married, *Mr. and Mrs. Paine separated;* not through the intervention of the grim tyrant who had caused the separation between Mr. Paine and his first wife, but for that most heinous of all imaginable causes, in old fogy estimation, *mutual consent.* On the *fourth of June*, in the year just designated, Mr. Paine signed articles of agreement, freely relinquishing to his wife all the property of which marriage had *legally robbed* her for his benefit. This was just; but a Thomas Paine would blush to call it magnanimous. Behold them both, in the prime of life in a predicament in which they were debarred, by the inscrutable wisdom of society, from the *legal* exercise of those functions on which nearly all their enjoyments, including health itself, depended.

All the causes of this separation are not known. Well, I'm heartily glad of it. Yet I delight not in beholding vexation and disappointment, even though the victims are the impertinently inquisitive. Still, I repeat, I'm most heartily glad of it.

That neither Mr. nor Mrs. Paine abused, or *voluntarily* even offended each other, is conclusive from the fact that Mr. Paine always spoke very respectfully and kindly of his wife; and, says the veracious Clio Rickman, "frequently sent her money, without letting her know the source whence it came;" and Mrs. Paine always held her husband in such high esteem, though she differed widely from him in the important and complicated matter of religion, that if any one spoke disrespectfully of him in her presence, she deigned not a word of answer, but indignantly

left the room, even though she were at table. If questioned on the subject of her separation from her marital partner, she did the same. Sensible woman.

"Clio Rickman asserts, and the most intimate friends of Mr. Paine support him," says Mr. Gilbert Vale in his excellent Life of Paine,* to which I here, once for all, acknowledge myself much indebted, "that Paine never cohabited with his second wife. Sherwin treats the subject as ridiculous; but Clio Rickman was a man of integrity, and he asserts that he has the documents showing this strange point, together with others, proving that this arose from no physical defects in Paine." When the question was plainly put to Mr. Paine by a friend, instead of spitting in the questioner's face, or kicking him, he replied:—"I had a cause; it is no business of anybody." Oh, immortal Paine! Did you know the feelings which the writing of the five last paragraphs has cost me, you would forgive; ay, even pity me.

And now, dear public, having, to please you, stepped aside from the path of legitimate history, permit me to continue the digression a little, in order to please myself. Surely you can afford some extra attention to one who has sacrificed his feelings, and, but for what I am now going to say, will have sacrificed his self-respect, even, for your accommodation.

A large portion of the christian world believes that the marriage tie, once formed, should continue till severed by death, or adultery. This is supposed to be,—first, in accordance with scripture; secondly, in accordance with the best interests of society. "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder," except for "cause of adultery," is the text in the first place, and the prevention of licentiousness, and regard for the interests of children, constitute the pretext in the second place. But society blindly jumps to the conclusion that the constantly varying decrees of *legislative bodies* designate "what *God* hath joined," and that august body is equally uncritical with respect to what adultery, both according to scripture and common sense, means. When *any* joining becomes abhorent to the feelings which almighty power has implanted in man, to attempt to force the continuance of such joining, under the plea of authority from such power, is most atrocious; and "Jesus," or whoever spoke in his name, thus rationally defines adultery:

* This "Life of Thomas Paine," by G. Vale, is published at the office of that most able advocate of free disscussion, the "Boston Investigator."

"Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her." "Jesus" *did not* condemn the woman, who, under pressure of legal restriction, committed the "very act" of adultery; but he *did* condemn her accusers, in the severest and most cutting manner possible.

We have already shown the utter disregard which the supposed almighty father of Jesus showed—for monogamic marriage; that he did not even respect *vested rights* in the connection; that he who is believed to have said—"be ye perfect even as I am perfect," trampled on the marital rules according to which the poor carpenter, Joseph, had been betrothed to his Mary.

How well the son of Mary followed in the footsteps of his "Almighty" father, we have already demonstrated; and I shall close all I have to say on the supposed divinity of this subject, by calling the attention of the reader to the high respect which "Jesus" paid to the woman who had had five husbands, and who was, at the time he did her the honour to converse with her in public, and to even expound his mission to her, cohabiting with a man to whom she was not married. Nothing in scripture is plainer, than that Jesus was such an out and out free-lover in principle, as to hold that as soon as married people looked on others than each other with lustful eyes, they were no longer so, *legally*; but that their old connections should give place to new ones. In the perfect state which "Jesus" in his parabolical language called "Heaven," he explicitly declared, in reference to what the old fogies of his time called marriage, "that they neither marry nor are given in marriage;" and if "the Saviour" said this in reprobation of the comparatively slight bondage which encumbered marriage in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago, what would he say were he to visit Christendom at the present time?

Wouldn't he make the "whip of small cords" with which he thrashed the money changers, whiz about the ears of those legislators and judges, who dare christen their tyrannical and abominable inventions—marriage! who have the audacity to attribute their wretched expedients and stupid blunders to eternal wisdom?

So much as to the scriptural view of marriage. For information as to the effects of "legal marriage" in the cure of licentiousness, and in promoting the welfare of children, consult the records of prostitution, the alms-house registers, and

the swarms of beggars, by which you are continually importuned. As to the effect of the "holy bonds" on domestic felicity, I verily believe that if they were suddenly and completely severed, the dealers in arsenic who happened to have but little stock on hand, would bless their lucky stars.

And I speak from a knowledge of the causes which either favorably or unfavorably affect the human organism, in saying, that it is perfectly certain, that if the unnatural tie which arrogates the name of marriage, was universally severed, suicide would diminish one-half, idiocy and insanity would disappear, prolapsus uteri and hysteria would be almost unknown, the long catalogue of diseases consequent on hopeless despair, dreary ennui, and chronic fretfulness, would be shorn of nine-tenths its present length, the makers of little shrouds and coffins would have little or nothing to do, and the business of abortionists would be ruined. In short, if matrimonial bondage was abolished, and our social structure reorganized, so as to correspond with the change, the "broken spirit" that "drieth the bones," would so give place to "the merry heart, that doeth good like a medicine," that little of the doctor's medicine would be needed; and human life would receive an accession of at least twenty per cent. in length, and one hundred per cent. in value.

But indissoluble marriage, and its correlates, adultery, fornication, prostitution, the unmentionable crime against nature, and masturbation, are part and parcel of the present imperfect condition of all things in man's connection; of the remedy for which, I shall treat, when I come to consider the universality and thoroughness of the revolution in which Paine was, without but glimmeringly perceiving it, so efficient an actor.

In 1774, Mr. Paine went again to London; where, soon after his arrival, he made the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin (then on an embassy to the British government, from one of her North American provinces), who, perceiving in him abilities of no ordinary character, advised him to quit his native country, where he was surrounded by so many difficulties, and try his fortune in America; he also gave him a letter of introduction to one of his most intimate friends in Philadelphia.

Paine left England towards the end of the year 1774, and arrived in Philadelphia about two months thereafter.

PERIOD SECOND.

1774—1787.

FROM MR. PAINE'S ARRIVAL IN AMERICA, TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE; EMBRACING HIS TRANSACTIONS IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

SHORTLY after the arrival of Mr. Paine in America, he was engaged as editor of the "Pennsylvania Magazine," the publication of which had just been commenced, by Mr. Aitkin, bookseller, of Philadelphia. This brought him acquainted with Dr. Rush.

Up to this period, Paine had been a whig. But from the practical tone of much of his editorial, it is probable that he now began to suspect that that speculative abstraction, British constitutionalism, had exhausted its usefulness in the economy of the social organism; and that human progress could reach a higher plane than that, the foundations of which were a theological church establishment, and its corresponding hotch-potch of kings, lords, and commons. And here I will remark, that Paine's distinguishing characteristic—the trait which constituted his greatness—was his capability of being ahead of his time. Were he bodily present now, he would be as far in advance of the miserable sham of freedom to which the majorityism which he advocated, though provisionally necessary, has dwindled, as he was in advance of the governmental expedient, which reached the stage of effeteness in his day. "The Crisis," instead of commencing with "These are the times that try men souls," would begin with "These are the times that exhaust men's power of endurance." Demagogism, with the whole power of the majority to enforce its tyranny, has declared that "to the victors belong the spoils;" that it has a right to bind the minority in all cases whatsoever. Its recklessness is in complete contrast with the regard which even Britain pays to the interests of her subjects; and in taxation, and peculation in office, it out-does Austrian despotism itself.

"Majorityism has carried its insolence so far as to despise nothing so much as the name and memory of him who risked his life, his honor, his all, to protect its infancy; it has scornfully refused his portrait a place on the walls of the very hall which once rang with popular applause of the eloquence which his soul-stirring pleas for elective franchise inspired."

"Yes; the city council of Philadelphia has, in 1859, in obedience to the commands of that public opinion, which was the court of last appeal, of him who first, on this continent, dared pronounce the words American Independence, refused his portrait a place by the side of his illustrious co-workers; thus rebuking, and most impudently insulting Washington, who in an ecstacy of admiration grasped the hand of the author of 'Common Sense,' and invited him to share his table; Franklin, who invited him to our shores; Lafayette, to whom he was dearer than a brother; Barlow, who pronounced him 'one of the most benevolent and disinterested of mankind;' Thomas Jefferson, who sent a government ship to reconduct him to our shores; and all the friends of popular suffrage in France, who, at the time that tried men's souls there, elected him to their national councils."

"Like the Turkish despot who cut off the head and blotted out of existence the family of his prime minister, to whom he owed the preservation of his throne, majorityism has crowded the name of its chief apostle almost out of the history of its rise."

"Freedom of speech, particularly on religious subjects, and on the government's pet project, is a myth; every seventh day the freedom of action is restricted to going to church, dozing away the time in the house, taking a disreputable stroll, or venturing on a not strictly legal ride. We have nothing like the amount of individual freedom which is enjoyed by the men and women of imperially governed France; and notwithstanding the muzzling of the press by Louis Napoleon, there could be published within the very shade of the Tuilleries, a truer and more liberal history of Democracy and its leaders, and of *American Independence*, than any considerable house, except the one from which this emanates, dare put forth, within the vast area over which the star-spangled banner waves.

"This is but a tithe of the despotism which public opinion, free to be formed by priests, and directed by demagogues, has inflicted: but a faint view of how abominably prostituted

liberty must inevitably become, if unregulated by science. If democracy has not exhausted all the good there was in it—if majorityism has not become effete, and as obnoxious to progress as monarchy ever was—in short, if what is *now* called liberty, is not slavery, there is not such a thing as slavery on the earth."

At the close of the year 1775, when the American Revolution had progressed as far as the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, John Adams, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington, had met together to read the terrible despatches they had received. Having done which, they pause in gloom and silence. Presently Franklin speaks: "What," he asks, "is to be the end of all this? Is it to obtain justice of Great Britain, to change the ministry, to soften a tax? Or is it for"—— He paused; the word *independence* yet choked the bravest throat that sought to utter it.

At this critical moment, Paine enters. Franklin introduces him, and he takes his seat. He well knows the cause of the prevailing gloom, and breaks the deep silence thus: "These States of America must be independent of England. That is the only solution of this question!" They all rise to their feet at this political blasphemy. But, nothing daunted, he goes on; his eye lights up with patriotic fire as he paints the glorious destiny which America, considering her vast resources, ought to achieve, and adjures them to lend their influence to rescue the Western Continent from the absurd, unnatural, and unprogressive predicament of being governed by a small island, three thousand miles off. Washington leaped forward, and taking both his hands, besought him to publish these views in a book.

Paine went to his room, seized his pen, lost sight of every other object, toiled incessantly, and in December, 1775, the work entitled "Common Sense," which caused the Declaration of Independence, and brought both people and their leaders face to face with the work they had to accomplish, was sent forth on its mission. "That book," says Dr. Rush, "burst forth from the press with an effect that has been rarely produced by types and paper, in any age or country."

"Have you seen the pamphlet, 'Common Sense?'" asked Major General Lee, in a letter to Washington; "I never saw such a masterly, irresistible performance. It will, if I mistake not, in concurrence with the trancendent folly and wickedness of the ministry, give the *coup-de-grace* to Great Britain.

In short, I own myself convinced by the arguments, of the necessity of separation."

That idea of Independence the pen of Paine fed with fuel from his brain when it was growing dim. We cannot overrate the electric power of that pen. At one time Washington thought that his troops, disheartened, almost naked, and half starved, would entirely disband. But the Author-Hero of the Revolution was tracking their march and writing by the light of camp-fires the series of essays called "The Crisis." And when the veterans who still clung to the glorious cause they had espoused were called together, these words broke forth upon them: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph."

"*These are the times that try men's souls*," was the watchword at the battle of Trenton, and Washington himself set the pen of Paine above any sword wielded that day. But we need not dwell on the fact of Paine's services and influence at this eventful period. He stood the acknowledged leader of American statemanship, and the soul of the American Revolution, by the proclamation of the Legislatures of all the States, and that of the Congress of the United States; the tribute of his greatest enemy was in these words: "The cannon of Washington was not more formidable to the British than the pen of the author of 'Common Sense.'" A little less modesty, a little more preference of himself, to humanity, and a good deal more of what ought to be common sense on the part of the people he sought to free, and he would have been President of the United States; and America, instead of France, would have had the merit of bestowing the highest honor on the most deserving of mankind.

If Paine had been consulted to the extent he ought to have been, by those who modeled the republic he was so instrumental in starting into existence, our social structure would have been so founded, that it might have lasted till superseded by the immeasurably better one to which I shall presently allude, and to which, as I shall show, his measures aimed. It would not *now* depend upon a base so uncertain that it has to be carefully shored up by such props as gibbets, prisons, alms-

houses, and soup-dispensing committees, in order to prevent its being sapped by the hunger-driven slaves of "free labor," nor would our Union be already in such danger of falling to pieces, that the cords which bind it together are as flimsy as cotton, and as rotten as are the souls of those who expose both their religious and their political opinions for sale as eagerly as they do their most damaged goods.

On the 17th of April, 1777, Congress elected Mr. Paine secretary to the committee of foreign affairs. In this capacity, he stood in the same relation to the committee that the English secretary for foreign affairs did to the Cabinet, and it was not from vanity, but in order to preserve the dignity of the new government under which he acted, that he claimed the title which was bestowed on the British minister, who performed a function corresponding to his own.

"The Crisis" is contained in sixteen numbers; to notice which, separately, would involve a history of the American Revolution itself. In fact, they comprise a *truer* history of that event than does any *professed* history of it yet written. They comprise the *soul* of it, of which every *professed* history is destitute. A disgrace which this country can never wipe out.

In January, 1779, Paine resigned his secretaryship, in consequence of a misunderstanding which had taken place between him and Congress, on account of one Silas Deane.

In the early part of the war, it appears that Deane had been employed as an agent in France, for the purpose of obtaining supplies, either as a loan from the French government, or, if he failed in this, to purchase them. But before entering on the duties of his office, Dr. Franklin and Mr. Lee were added to the mission, and the three proceeded to Paris for the same purpose. The French monarch, more perhaps from his hostility to the English government, than from any attachment to the American cause, acceded to the request; and the supplies were immediately furnished. As France was then upon amicable terms with England, a pledge was given by the American commissioners that the affair should remain a secret. The supplies were accordingly shipped in the name of a Mr. Beaumarchais, and consigned to an imaginary house in the United States. Deane, taking advantage of the secresy which had been promised, presented a claim for compensation in behalf of himself and Beaumarchais; thinking that the auditing committee would prefer compliance to an exposure of their ally, the king of

France, to a rupture with England. Mr. Paine, perceiving the trick, and knowing the circumstances of the case, resolved on laying the transaction before the public. He accordingly wrote for the newspapers several essays, under the title of "Common Sense to the Public on Mr. Deane's Affairs," in which he exposed the dishonest designs of Deane. The business, in consequence, soon became a subject of general conversation: the demand was rejected by the auditing committee, and Deane soon afterwards absconded to England.

For this piece of service to the Americans, Paine was thanked and applauded by the people; but by this time a party had begun to form itself, whose principles, if not the reverse of independence, were the reverse of republicanism. These men had long envied the popularity of Paine, but from their want of means to check or control it, they had hitherto remained silent. An opportunity was now offered for venting their spleen. Mr. Paine, in exposing the trickery of Deane, had incautiously mentioned one or two circumstances that had come to his knowledge in consequence of his office; this was magnified into a breach of confidence, and a plan was immediately formed for depriving him of his situation; accordingly, a motion was made for an order to bring him before congress. Mr. Paine readily attended; and on being asked whether the articles in question were written by him, he replied that they were. He was then directed to withdraw. As soon as he had left the house, a member arose and moved: "That Thomas Paine be discharged from the office of secretary to the committee on foreign affairs;" but the motion was lost upon a division. Mr. Paine then wrote to congress, requesting that he might be heard in his own defence, and Mr. Lawrence made a motion for that purpose, which was negatived. The next day he sent in his resignation, concluding with these words: "As I cannot, consistently with my character as a freeman, submit to be censured unheard; therefore, to preserve that character and maintain that right, I think it my duty to resign the office of secretary to the committee for foreign affairs; and I do hereby resign the same."

This conduct on the part of the congress may, in some degree, be attributed to a desire to quiet the fears of the French ambassador, who had become very dissatisfied in consequence of its being known to the world that the supplies were a present from his master. To silence his apprehension, and preserve the friendship of the French court, they treated Paine with ingra-

titude. This they acknowledged at a future period by a grant; of which I shall have occasion to speak in its proper place.

Paine was now deprived of the means of obtaining a livelihood; and being averse to rendering his literary labors subservient to his personal wants, he engaged himself as clerk to Mr. Biddle, an attorney at Philadelphia.

The ingratitude of congress produced no change in Mr. Paine's patriotism. On every occasion, he continued to display the same degree of independence and resolution, which had first animated him in favor of the republican cause. He had enlisted himself as a volunteer in the American cause; and he vindicated her rights under every change of circumstance, with unabated ardor.

In a communication made many years afterwards to Cheetham (who would have contradicted it, could he have done so without stating what everyone would immediately know to be false), he says:—

"I served in the army the whole of the 'time that tried men's souls,' from the beginning to the end."

Soon after the declaration of independence, July 4, 1776, congress recommended that a body of ten thousand men, to be called the flying camp, because it was to act wherever necessary, should be formed from the militia and volunteers of Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. I went with one division from Pennsylvania, under General Roberdeau. We were stationed at Perth Amboy, and afterwards at Bergen; and when the time of the flying camp expired, and they went home, I went to Fort Lee, and served as aide-de-camp to Greene, who commanded at Fort Lee, and was with him through the whole of the black times of that trying campaign.

I began the first number of the "Crisis," beginning with the well-known expression, 'These are the times that try men's souls,' at Newark, upon the retreat from Fort Lee, and continued writing it at every place we stopped at, and had it printed at Philadelphia, the 19th of December, six days before the taking the Hessians at Trenton, which, with the affair at Princeton, the week after, put an end to the black times."

Soon after the resignation of his secretaryship, he was chosen clerk of the legislature of Pennsylvania. This appointment is a proof that, though he had some enemies, he had many friends; and that the malicious insinuations of the former had not been able to weaken the attachment of the latter.

In February, 1781, Paine, at the earnest solicitation of Colonel Laurens, accompanied him to France, on a mission which the former had himself set on foot, which was, to obtain of the French Government a loan of a million sterling annually during the war. This mission was so much more successful than they expected, that six millions of livres as a present, and ten millions as a loan was the result. They sailed from Brest, at the beginning of June, and arrived at Boston in August, having under their charge two millions and a half in silver, and a ship and a brig laden with clothing and military stores.

Before going to France, as just narrated, Paine headed a private subscription list, with the sum of five hundred dollars, all the money he could raise; and the nobleness of his conduct so stimulated the munificence of others, that the subscriptions amounted to the generous sum of three hundred thousand pounds.

Soon after the war of Independence had been brought to a successful termination, Mr. Paine returned to Bordentown, in New Jersey, where he had a small property. Washington, rationally fearing that one so devoted and generous might be in circumstances not the most flourishing, wrote to him the following letter :—

ROCKY HILL, *September 10th, 1783.*

I have learned, since I have been at this place, that you are at Bordentown. Whether for the sake of retirement or economy, I know not. Be it for either, for both, or whatever it may, if you will come to this place and partake with me, I shall be exceedingly happy to see you at it.

Your presence may remind congress of your past services to this country; and if it is in my power to impress them, command my best exertions with freedom, as they will be rendered cheerfully by one who entertains a lively sense of the importance of your works, and who, with much pleasure, subscribes himself

Your sincere friend,

G. WASHINGTON.

In 1785, congress, on the report of a committee consisting of Mr. Gerry, Mr. Petit, and Mr. King,

Resolved, That the board of treasury take order for paying to Mr. Thomas Paine the sum of three thousand dollars.

This, however, was not a gratuity, although it took that shape. It was but little if any more than was due Mr. Paine, in consequence of the depreciation of the continental money in which his salary as secretary of the committee of foreign affairs had been paid.

Mr. Paine had resolved not to make any application to the congress on the score of his literary labors; but he had several friends in the provincial assemblies who were determined that his exertions should not pass unrewarded. Through their influence, motions in his favor were brought before the legislature of Pennsylvania and the assembly of New York; the former gave him £500, and the latter the confiscated estate of a Mr. Frederick Devoe, a royalist. This estate, situated at New Rochelle, consisting of more than three hundred acres of land in a high state of cultivation, with a spacious and elegant stone house, beside extensive out-buildings, was a valuable acquisition; and the readiness with which it was granted, is a proof of the high estimation in which Mr. Paine's services were held by one of the most opulent and powerful states in the Union.

In 1786, he published at Philadelphia, his "Dissertations on Government," "The Affairs of the Bank," and "Paper-Money." The bank alluded to was the one which had been established some years before, under the name of the "Bank of North America," on the capital of the three hundred thousand pounds, which resulted from the subscription which Paine headed with five hundred dollars, as has already been stated; which bank, instead of being what banks now are,—the stimulants of a gambling credit system, and a runious importing system, had been of vast use to the cause of our national independence. Paine advocated a paper currency when it was of use, instead of being an abuse; in his days it helped to secure national independence, instead of subjecting the country, as it now does, to a servitude to the interests of England, which could she have foreseen, it is questionable whether even British pride would not have so succumbed to British avarice, that not a gun would have been fired, or a sword drawn against us. England could have afforded to pay us as many pounds for subjecting ourselves as we have done to her interests, as it cost her pennies to vainly attempt to prevent us from doing this. It is highly worthy of remark, that

Paine opposed giving even the independence promoting Bank of North America, a *perpetual charter*.

At this time Mr. Paine was highly popular, and enjoyed the esteem and friendship of the most literary, scientific, and patriotic men of the age.

PERIOD THIRD.

1787—1809.

MR. PAINE GOES TO EUROPE. HIS REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN ENGLAND. IS ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE. TAKES AN ACTIVE PART IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. HIS DEATH.

THE success which had crowned Mr. Paine's exertions in America, made him resolve to try the effects of his influence in the very citadel of the foes of liberal principles in government, whose out-posts he had stormed. As America no longer needed his aid, he resolved to attack the English government at home; to free England herself.

Accordingly, in April, 1787, he sailed from the United States for France, and arrived in Paris after a short passage. His knowledge of mechanics and natural philosophy had procured him the honor of being admitted a member of the American Philosophical Society; he was also admitted Master of Arts by the University of Philadelphia. These honors, though not of much consequence in themselves, were the means of introducing him to some of the most scientific men in France, and soon after his arrival he exhibited to the Adademy of Sciences, the model of an iron bridge which had occupied much of his leisure time during his residence in America. This model received the unqualified approbation of the Academy, and it was afterwards adopted by the most scientific men of England.

From Paris Mr Paine proceeded to London, where he arrived on the third of September. Before the end of that month he went to Thetford to see his mother, who was now borne down by age, and was, besides, in very straightened circcmstances. His father, it appears, had died during his absence; and he hastened to the place of his birth to relieve the wants of his surviving parent. He led a recluse sort of life at Thetford for several weeks, being principally occupied in writing a pamph-

let on the state of the nation, under the title of "Prospects on the Rubicon." This was published in London, toward the end of the year 1787.

During the year 1788, Mr. Paine was principolly occupied in building his bridge. For this purpose he went to Rotherham in Yorkshire, in order that he might have an opportunity of superintending its iron castings.

The situation of France had now become of great interest to all Europe, and Mr. Paine was in the confidence of the chief actors in the great events which were there taking place, and he hastened again to Paris to witness and assist in the downfall of Bourbon despotism, to act his part in the great drama of freedom, the scene of which had shifted from the land of Washington to the country of Lafayette.

The French are peculiarly sensitive to the shafts of ridicule; and Voltarie,* taking a wise advantage of this, had made such good use of his exquisite wit, that both priestcraft and statecraft had become rather absurd than respectable in the estimation of the higher orders of those who held both their wealth and their positions under such patronage.

The writings of the Abbe Raynal had imbued the French with respect for the *natural* rights of humanity, and consequently with contempt and abhorrence for the *vested* rights of tyrants; and the writings of that great apostle of liberty, Rousseau, had long been preparing the way, in France, for what those of Paine had effected in America; in fact, Rousseau was the "author hero" of the French Revolution; and it was more owing to his pen, than to anything else, that the views of the people of France so differed from those of their rulers, that, whilst the latter, in assisting America to throw off the British yoke, looked no further than the weakening and humiliating of England, the former approved of, and sustained the measure, as initiatory to the destruction of monarchy itself.

The rĕturn from America of the troops of Lafayette had furnished a vast reinforcement to the popular cause, and infused its principles throughout all France. Mr. Paine remarks, that—

"As it was impossible to separate the military events which took place in America from the principles of the American

* That Encyclopedia of wit and wisdom, Voltaire's "Philosophical Dictionary," is published by Mr. J. P. Mendum, at the office of the "Boston Investigator."

revolution, the publication of those events in France necessarily connected themselves with the principles that produced them. Many of the facts were in themselves principles; such as the Declaration of American Independence, and the treaty of alliance between France and America, which recognized the natural rights of man, and justified resistence to oppression."

This is the proper place to show that neither Paine, Rousseau, nor Voltaire are at all chargeable with the abominations which have been perpetrated, both in America and France, in the name of liberty; and that our 'scurvy politicians' have no more business to spout their impudent clap-trap in the name of the principles advocated by the author of "The Rights of Man," than Marat, St. Just, and Robespierre, had to mouth Rousseau. Nothing is plainer, than that the two great moving minds in the American and French revolutions aimed at the *practical actualization of liberty.*

Had Rousseau awoke from the dead at the time of the French Revolution,—"What!" he would have exclaimed. "Do you take carnage to be what I meant by the state of nature?" "Miscreants!" Paine would thunder in the ears of our rulers, were he now to visit the land over which the star-spangled banner waves. "Is elective franchise to *end* in majority-despotism and spoils? Do you think I mean caucus trickery, election frauds, office gambling, corruption,—in short *demagogism,* when I said *free government?*

"Are my teachings to be estimated from the stand-point where 'tis difficult, if not impossible to determine whether 'free laborers' or 'slaves' have the most uncomfortable time of it? In the name of 'Common Sense,' I protest against your gross misrepresentation of me. The contemptible knave and fool game which you are playing in the name of liberty, is but the *back* step of the *forward* one *towards* freedom, which I helped mankind to take.

Call you your miserable hotch-potch of spent supernaturalism and worn out absolution, what I meant by freedom? You might as well call a rotting heap of building materials, which some architect, whose skill was far in advance of his time, had not lived long enough to put together according to his design, the edifice which he intended.

"Ye infidels,* who meanly and hypocritically sneak for

* I wish it to be particularly observed, that I give the term "infidels," a much more extended sense than that which it is popularly supposed to convey.

patronage under the shreds and tatters of the worn out cloak of the church, or who quit the ranks of superstition, only to waste your energies over an old book which I completely emasculated (but lived to discover that I had mistaken a prominent sympton for the disease I sought to cure); or to dispute and wrangle over mere speculative abstractions, or at most, to eat and drink and dance, and *talk* in memory of me, every twenty-ninth of January, *when it does not fall on a Sunday.* In calling on my name, and looking backward in unavailing admiration of what I did, instead of pushing ahead and carrying on the work which I began, you confer no more honor on me than modern Christians do on their "Jesus." You are no more like me, than papists and protestants are the true followers of the Pharisee-condemning, Sabbath-breaking son of the world-famous carpenter of Galillee.

"My religion was 'to *do good.*' Yours has thus far been to do nothing or worse than nothing.

"Why do you not *organize*, and have your own schools, instead of allowing your children to be supernaturalistically educated? You allow the reasoning faculties of the scions of humanity to be completely maimed, and then blame nature because they are 'vicious;' or, like idiots holding candles for the blind to read by, you ply them with reason, when they arrive at the age when they *ought to be* reasonable, but are confirmed in folly instead. Has the freedom of the people to chose their own teachers and head their own churches, culminated in schools, the very hot-beds of superstition, and in churches more intimately connected with, and more expensive to the state, *sub rosa*, than the Catholic church *openly* is, even in Rome?

"Why do you not elevate woman, instead of letting your daughters grow up under the influence of the priests? Why do you so stubbornly cling to that immaculate abortion; that most pestiferous effluvia of supernaturalism; that quintessence of malice; that thickest fog that ever darkened the understanding; that strong-hold of all that is arbitrary; that refinement of cruelty; that last relic of absolutistic absurdity,—*moralism?* and why is its correlative,—*opinionism* still the basis of your political system? Why are you, like your opponents, still appealing to that most fallible of all guides,—conscience? And in the name of all that is intelligible, what good is there in that chronic suicide which you outdo even supernaturalists in lauding as *virtue*? Besides, has 'virtue,' notwithstanding all the pains

taken with it, and all the hot-house fostering that that plant has received, grown a hair's breadth since the remotest ages?

"Why has not *how* to, long since superseded *ought to?*

"Abandon, I beseech you, that inflicter of martyrdom; that watchword of Robespierre, and of the most relentless tyrants that ever tortured humanity,—*principle.* Let the *science and art* of goodness take its place.

"The severest and most persistent scourges of the human race are, and ever have been, men and women of principle. *They* cannot be even *bribed* to do right. Robespierre was *par excellence*, 'the incorruptible;' and so was Marat.

"Principle is the very bed of Procrustes. Principle is the disguise in which the 'angel of darkness' appears so like an 'angel of light,' as to deceive, thus far, all but 'the *very* elect.' It partially deceived even me. But I had not your means of detecting the cheat. In my day it had not been, as it recently has been, demonstrated that man's will, aided by the force of all that is intelligible fully developed and *harmoniously* and most advantageously *combined*, is the measure of his power, and of nature's resources; that well doing, to any extent worth naming, requires nothing more, and *nothing less*, than such force, such development, and such combination; that to progress, there is no obstruction, even to the unfriendliness of climate, which is not, through human heart, working with, in, and through nature, removeable.

"In my time, it had not been shown (as it recently has been, to a mathematical demonstration) that the only possible way to make people good, is to create the requisite *materialistic conditions;* and that therefore the most stupid of blunders—the most infernal of cruelties is *punishment.*

"You affect to love science. Make it loveable. Raise it to the dignity of the highest law, or religion; *make it the basis of government;* and thus avail yourselves of its *whole* use, instead of the little benefit you derive from its 'beggarly elements.'

"Patiently discover, instead of recklessly and vainly 'enacting laws; scientifically develop, and artistically combine the whole force of physical nature, and the whole power of man. Assist nature, whose head you are, to *create*, till supply is adequate to demand; till creation is complete; till harmony is in exact proportion to present antagonism; till no obstacle stands between man and perfect goodness, perfect freedom, and perfect and sufficiently lasting happiness. Thus, alone, can

you eliminate that synonym for ignorance—mystery, and its resulting 'vice,' 'virtue,' moralism, absolutism, demagogism, slavery, and misery.

"If you love, and would truly honor me, act *forward*, according to the *spirit*, and not *backward*, according to the *letter*, of what I taught. Let *onward to perfection* be your motto.

"Your numbers are sufficient, as you would see if you would but stand out; you are far from poor, on the average, and you include nearly all the learned and scientific; but you are somehow or other so averse to organizing and becoming an efficient body, with a head, that like the mutually suspicious eighty-seven millions of Indians, to whom a few well regulated British troops dictate terms, you suffer your even half organized foes to trample your rights under foot, when if you would organize on an intelligible, TRULY *selfish* scientific and artistic basis, your own rights, and those of all your fellow-men would be secured. Down with that barricade of hypocrisy,—principle. Liberty, goodness, in short, happiness, can be nothing less than *the crowning art.*

"Instead of admitting, as you do, that natnre *ought* to have a supernatural guardian or helper (inasmuch as you admit that she is incompetent to supply more than a tithe of the satisfaction which her wants, as manifested through her highest organism, man call for), why do you not meet the question, as it alone can be met, by demonstrating that man no more *really* wants or needs *absolutely* eternal self-consciousness, than the infant *really* wants or needs the moon for a bauble, when he stretches forth his hand to grasp it, and weeps at his failure. But that what man really *does* want, nature, through science, art, *development*, can give? Can't you see that what man in reality means by perfect and 'eternal' happiness, is, perfect and *sufficiently-lasting* happiness? and that nature *must* furnish this, or prove a failure which would amount to a greater absurdity than '*supernaturalism*' itself? Do you not see that for man to even *desire* any thing *really* beyond nature, is to *prove* 'supernaturalism.' Mind, I have said *desire;* for man cannot conceive of, and therefore cannot desire the annihilation of duration and space. He cannot really wish for happiness without its conditions; if it came merely at his bidding,—if he could *believe* himself into Heaven, or *vote* himself free, both Heaven and freedom would pall on the appetite as soon as tasted.

"Had I lived at the time when Humboldt scanned nature, when Feuerbach demonstrated the naturalness of 'supernaturalism,' and showed the all-importance and *practical* significancy of man's instinctively inaugurating his abstract subjectivity of almighty; when Comte showed the connection, and proved the unity of all science; when Fourier discovered the equitable relations which should exist between labor, capital, and skill, and which, sooner or later, must displace the present unnatural and ruinous ones; had I lived when it had been demonstrated that *nature* is all sufficient; that science, art,—*development*, well prove adequate to all the requirements of miracle; that the highest aspirations of nature's highest organism, man, indicate the perfection to which nature is spontaneously tending, and which she *must* attain to; that the business of man is to discover how to *fully gratify all* the passions which *nature* has implanted in him (instead of trying to contrive how to mortify, repress, and overcome nearly all, and by far the best of them); how to live, till he has rung, so to speak, all the changes possible on his five senses, till the repetition becomes irksome; had I enjoyed the advantages derivable from all this, your steam engines, steam printing presses, sewing machines, and all other machines, and your electric telegraph, even, should have had its match in *social science and art;* you should, by this time, have had a religion *self evidently* true, and a system of law *necessarily* just; and the whole world should have been far advanced towards becoming a state *spontaneously* free."

Reader, considering how very far ahead of his time, it was *the distinguishing characteristic* of the author of the "Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason" to be, is it too much to suppose that, were he alive now, he would talk thus, except far more eloquently, beyond all question? Would not he who made but two steps from the government of priests, kings and lords, to the people's right to be their own church and their own governmont, have found out, before now, the means of escaping from demagogism? As one who is not prepared to admit that liberty is an empty name, that happiness at all answering to that which man desires, is an impractibility, I respectfully submit that he would. And I scorn the supposition that he would degrade himself, and the cause he espoused, so far as to make the pitiable and lying excuse which the betrayers of mankind offer in behalf of "free institutions,"—

that they are *no worse* than those, to escape from which, both earth and ocean have been reddened with human blood, and strewn with the ashes and the wrecks of human industry. Our "free institutions" have come to be so much worse than those confessedly despotic, that it is only the superior *natural* advantage, which our country enjoys, that has thus far preserved *even their name.*

The proper or natural functions of popularism are but transitional. The instant it is undertaken to erect democracy into a permanency, it dwindles to a most pitiable imitation—to a blundering re-enacting, under false names, of the worn out measures of the religion and politics, from which it is legitimately but a protest and a departure. It thus becomes so exceedingly corrupt and morbific, that the social organism, to protect itself from utter dissolution, is forced to reject it, and return again under its old regime. And nothing short of the religion and government of science can furnish an outlet from this vicious circle.

Mr. Paine again left France for England, in Nov. 1790, having witnessed the destruction of the Bastile, and been an attentive observer, if not an active adviser, of the revolutionary proceedings which had taken place during the preceding twelve months.

On the 13th of March, 1791, Mr. Jordan, No. 166 Fleet street, published for him the first part of "The Rights of Man." This work was intended to arouse the people of England to a sense of the defects and abuses of their vaunted system of government; besides which, it was a masterly refutation of the falsehoods and exaggerations of Edmund Burke's celebrated "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

About the middle of May, Mr. Paine again went to France. This was just before the king attempted to escape from his own dominions. On the occasion of the return of the fugitive monarch, Mr. Paine was, from an accidental circumstance, in considerable danger of losing his life. An immense concourse of people had assembled to witness the event. Among the crowd was Mr. Paine. An officer proclaimed the order of the national assembly, that all should be silent and covered, In an instant all except Mr. Paine, put on their hats. He had lost his cockade, the emblem of liberty and equality. The multitude observing that he remained uncovered, supposed that he was one of their enemies, and a cry instantly arose, "*Aristocrat! Aristocrat!*

à la lanterne ! à la lanterne !" He was instructed by those who stood near him to put on his hat, but it was some time before the matter could be satisfactorily explained to the multitude.

On the 13th of July, 1791, he returned to London, but it was not thought prudent that he should attend the public celebration of the French revolution, which was to take place on the following day. He was however, present at the meeting which was held at the Thatched House tavern, on the twentieth of August following. Of the address and declaration which issued from this meeting, and which was at first attributed to Mr. Horn Tooke, Mr. Paine was the author.

Mr. Paine was now engaged in preparing the second part of the "Rights of Man" for the press. In the mean time the ministry had received information that the work would shortly appear, and they resolved to get it suppressed if possible. Having ascertained the name of the printer, they employed him to endeavor to purchase the copyright. He began by offering a hundred guineas, then five hundred, and at length a thousand; but Mr. Paine told him, that he "would never put it in the power of any printer or publisher to suppress or alter a work of his."

Finding that Mr. Paine was not to be bribed, the ministry next attempted to suppress the work by means of prosecutions; but even in this they succeeded so badly, that the second part of the "Rights of Man" was published on the sixteenth of February, 1792, and at a moderate calculation, more than a hundred thousand copies of the work were circulated.

In August, 1792, Paine prepared a publication in defense of the "Rights of man," and of his motives in writing it; he entitled it "An Address to the Addressers on the late Proclamation." "This," says Sherwin, "is one of the severest pieces of satire that ever issued from the press."

About the middle of September, 1792, a French deputation announced to Mr. Paine that he had been elected to represent the department of Calais in the National Convention.

At Dover, whither he repaired, in order to embark for France, the treatment of the minions of British despotism towards the hated author of the "Rights of Man," was disgraceful and mean to the last degree. His trunks were all opened, and the contents examined. Some of his papers were seized, and it is probable that the whole would have been but

for the cool and steady conduct of their owner and his attend ants. When the custom-house officers had indulged their petty malice as long as they thought proper, Mr. Paine and his friends were allowed to embark, and they arrived at Calais in about three hours. The English-French representative, however, very narrowly escaped the vigilance of the despots he had provoked, for it appears that an order to detain him was received at Dover, in about twenty minutes after his embarkation.

A salute from the battery announced to the people of Calais the arrival of the distinguished foreigner, on whom they had bestowed an honor unprecedented.

His reception, both military and civic, was what a monarch might well have been proud of. "The garrison at Calais were under arms to receive this friend of liberty; the tri-colored cockade was presented to him by the mayor, and the handsomest woman in the town was selected to place it on his hat."*

This ceremony being over, he walked to Deissein's, in the *Rue de l'Egalité* (formerly *Rue de Roi*), the men, women, and children, crowding around him, and shouting "*Vive* Thomas Paine!" He was then conducted to the town-hall, and there presented to the municipality, who with the greatest affection embraced their representative. The mayor addressed him in a short speech (which was interpreted to him by his friend M. Audibert), to which Mr. Paine, laying his hand on his heart, replied that his life should be devoted to their service.

At the inn he was waited upon by the authorities, and by the president of the Constitutional society, who desired that he would attend their meeting that night: he cheerfully complied with the request, and the whole town would have been there, had there been room: the hall of the *Minimes* was so crowded that it was with the greatest difficulty they made way for Mr. Paine to the side of the president. Over the chair in which he sat were placed the bust of Mirabeau, and the colors

---

* The least unfair view of Thomas Paine's character and merits which has hitherto been found in the historical writings of any American author except Randall, Savage, and Vale (who quotes copiously from Sherwin), is taken by an ecclesiastic, Francis L. Hawkes, D.D., LL.D. His "Cyclopedia of Biography," from which I have quoted above, is published by the Messrs. D. Appleton & Co., who also publish Buckle's "History of Civilization in England," a work which would have fully satisfied the author of the "Age of Reason" himself, had he lived to read it.

of France, England and America united. A speaker from the tribune, formally announced his election, amid the plaudits of the people; for some minutes after nothing was heard but "*Vive la Nation! Vive* Thomas Paine," in voices both male and female.

On the following day an extra meeting was appointed to be held in the church in honor of the new deputy to the convention, the *Minimes* having been found quite suffocating from the vast concourse of people which had assembled on the previous occasion. At the theatre, on the evening after his arrival, a box was specially reserved for the author of the "Rights of Man," the object of the English proclamation.

Such was the enthusiasm of the people for the "author-hero" of the American Revolution, that Mr. Paine was also elected deputy for Abbeville, Beauvais, and Versailles; but the people of Calais having been beforehand in their choice, he preferred being their representative.

After remaining with his constituents a short time, he proceeded to Paris, in order to take his seat as a member of the National Assembly. On the road thither he met with similar honors to those which he had received at Calais. As soon as he arrived at Paris, he addressed a letter to his fellow-citizens, the people of France, thanking them for both adopting and electing him as their deputy to the convention.

Mr. Paine was shortly after his arrival in Paris, appointed a member of the committee for framing the new constitution. While he was performing the important duties of his station, the ministry of England were using every effort to counteract the (to them) dangerous principles which he had disseminated. For this purpose they filed informations against the different individuals who had sold the "Rights of Man," and also against the author. The trial of Mr. Paine came on at Guildhall, on the 18th of December, before that most cruel and vindictive of creatures that ever disgraced the bench of even a British court of justice, Lord Kenyon. As the judge was pensioned, and the jury packed, a verdict of guilty followed as a matter of course.

Mr. Erskine's plea for the defence was, as Mr. Paine observed, on reading a report of the farce which had been enacted under the name of a trial, "a good speech for himself, but a very poor defence of the 'Rights of Man.'"*

* "Paine's work," [the "Rights of Man,"] says Schlosser, in his "History

Seldom has the cowardice which a sense of guilt excites, reached such a panic as that into which the government of England was thrown by Thomas Paine. In France he was safe from their malice, but no less than ten individuals were prosecuted for selling his works, and by corrupted judges and packed juries, nine of the number were convicted, and severely fined or imprisoned, or both.

"On the first appearance of the 'Rights of Man,'" says Sherwin, "the ministry saw that it inculcated truths which they could not controvert; that it contained plans, which, if adopted, would benefit at least nine-tenths of the community, and that its principles were the reverse of the existing system of government; they therefore judged that the most politic method would be to treat the work with contempt, to represent it as a foolish and insignificant performance, unworthy of their notice, and undeserving the attention of the public. But they soon found the inefficiency of this mode of treatment; the more contempt they showed, the more the book was read, and approved of. Finding, therefore, that their declarations of contempt were as unsuccessful as their project of buying up the work, they determined upon prosecuting the author and publisher. Mr. Paine was not at all surprised at this resolution of the ministry; indeed, he had anticipated it on the publication of the second part of the work, and to remove any doubt as to his intention of defending the principles which he had so effectually inculcated, he addressed the following letter to his publisher:—

February 16th, 1792.

SIR,—Should any person, under the sanction of any kind of authority, inquire of you respecting the author and publisher of the "Rights of Man," you will please to mention me as the author and publisher of that work, and show to such person this letter. I will, as soon as I am made acquainted with it, appear and answer for the work personally.

Your humble servant,

THOMAS PAINE.

MR. JORDAN, No. 166 Fleet Street.

"The first intimation which Mr. Paine received," continues

---

of the Eighteenth Century," "made as great and as lasting an impression on certain classes in England as Burke's did upon the great majority of the higher and middle ranks."

Sherwin, "of the intentions of the ministry, was on the 14th of May, 1792. He was then at Bromly, in Kent, upon which he came immediately to town; on his arrival he found that Mr. Jordan had that evening been served with a summons to appear at the court of King's Bench on the Monday following, but for what purpose was not stated. Conceiving it to be on account of the work, he appointed a meeting with Mr. Jordan, on the next morning, when he provided a solicitor, and took the expense of the defense on himself. But Mr. Jordan, it appears, had too much regard for his person to hazard its safety on the event of a prosecution, and he compromised the affair with a solicitor of the treasury, by agreeing to appear in court and plead guilty. This arrangement answered the purpose of both parties—That of Jordan in liberating himself from the risk of a prosecution, and that of the ministry, since his plea of guilty amounted in some measure to a condemnation of the work."

The following letter from Mr. Paine to the Attorney-General, Sir Archibald Macdonald, shows, that but for the circumstance of his being called to France, as just related, it was his intention to have formally defended himself in the prosecution against him as author of the "Rights of Man."

SIR: Though I have some reason for believing that you were not the original promoter or encourager of the prosecution commenced against the work entitled "Rights of Man," either as that prosecution is intended to affect the author, the publisher, or the public; yet as you appear the official person therein, I address this letter to you, not as Sir Archibald Macdonald, but as Attorney-General.

You began by a prosecution against the publisher, Jordan, and the reason assigned by Mr. Secretary Dundas, in the House of Commons, in the debate on the proclamation, May 25, for taking that measure, was, he said, because Mr. Paine could not be found, or words to that effect. Mr. Paine, sir, so far from secreting himself, never went a step out of his way, nor in the least instance varied from his usual conduct, to avoid any measure you might choose to adopt with respect to him. It is on the purity of his heart, and the universal utility of the principles and plans which his writings contain, that he rests the issue; and he will not dishonor it by any kind of subterfuge. The apartments which he occupied at the time of writing the work last winter, he has continued to occupy to the present

hour, and the solicitors of the prosecution know where to find him; of which there is a proof in their own office as far back as the 21st of May, and also in the office of my own attorney.

But admitting for the sake of the case, that the reason for proceeding against the publisher was, as Mr. Dundas stated, that Mr. Paine could not be found, that reason can now exist no longer.

The instant that I was informed that an information was preparing to be filed against me, as the author of, I believe, one of the most useful books ever offered to mankind, I directed my attorney to put in an appearance; and as I shall meet the prosecution fully and fairly, and with a good and upright conscience, I have a right to expect that no act of littleness will be made use of on the part of the prosecution towards influencing the future issue with respect to the author. This expression may, perhaps, appear obscure to you, but I am in the possession of some matters which serve to show that the action against the publisher is not intended to be a *real* action. If, therefore, any persons concerned in the prosecution have found their cause so weak as to make it appear convenient to them to enter into a negotiation with the publisher, whether for the purpose of his submitting to a verdict, and to make use of the verdict so obtained as a circumstance, by way of precedent, on a future trial against myself; or for any other purpose not fully made known to me; if, I say, I have cause to suspect this to be the case, I shall most certainly withdraw the defence I should otherwise have made, or promoted, on his (the publisher's) behalf, and leave the negotiations to themselves, and shall reserve the whole of the defence for the *real* trial.

But, sir, for the purpose of conducting this matter with at least that appearance of fairness and openness that shall justify itself before the public whose cause it really is (for it is the right of public discussion and investigation that is questioned), I have to propose to you to cease the prosecution against the publisher; and as the reason or pretext can no longer exist for continuing it against him because Mr. Paine could not be found, that you would direct the whole process against me, with whom the prosecuting party will not find it possible to enter into any private negotiation.

I will do the cause full justice, as well for the sake of the nation, as for my own reputation.

Another reason for discontinuing the process against the pub-

lisher is, because it can amount to nothing. First, because a jury in London cannot decide upon the fact of publishing beyond the limits of the jurisdiction of London, and therefore the work may be republished over and over again in every county in the nation, and every case must have a separate process; and by the time that three or four hundred prosecutions have been had, the eyes of the nation will then be fully open to see that the work in question contains a plan the best calculated to root out all the abuses of government, and to lessen the taxes of the nation upwards of *six millions annually*.

Secondly, because though the gentlemen of London may be very expert in understanding their particular professions and occupations, and how to make business contracts with government beneficial to themselves as individuals, the rest of the nation may not be disposed to consider them sufficiently qualified nor authorized to determine for the whole nation on plans of reform, and on systems and principles of government. This would be in effect to erect a jury into a national convention, instead of electing a convention, and to lay a precedent for the probable tyranny of juries, under the pretence of supporting their rights.

That the possibility always exists of packing juries will not be denied; and, therefore, in all cases where government is the prosecutor, more especially in those where the right of public discussion and investigation of principles and systems of government is attempted to be suppressed by a verdict, or in those where the object of the work that is prosecuted is the reform of abuse and the abolition of sinecure places and pensions, in all these cases the verdict of a jury will itself become a subject of discussion; and therefore, it furnishes an additional reason for discontinuing the prosecution against the publisher, more especially as it is not a secret that there has been a negotiation with him for secret purposes, and for proceeding against me only. I shall make a much stronger defence than what I believe the treasury solicitor's agreement with him will permit him to do.

I believe that Mr. Burke, finding himself defeated, and not being able to make any answer to the "Rights of Man," has been one of the promotors of this prosecution; and I shall return the compliment to him by showing, in a future publication, that he has been a masked pensioner at fifteen hundred pounds per annum for about ten years.

Thus it is that the public money is wasted, and the dread of public investigation is produced.

I am, sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

THOMAS PAINE.

SIR A. MACDONALD, *Attorney-General.*

On the 25th of July, 1792, the Duke of Brunswick issued his sanguinary manifesto, in which he declared that the allies were resolved to inflict the most dreadful punishments on the national assembly, for their treatment of the royal family; he even went so far as to threaten to give up Paris to military execution. This made the people furious, and drove them to deeds of desperation. A party was consequently formed in the convention for putting the king to death. Mr. Paine labored hard to prevent matters from being carried to this extremity, but though his efforts produced a few converts to his doctrine, the majority of his colleagues were too enraged at the duplicity of the king, and the detestable conduct of the foreign monarchs, with whom he was leagued, to be satisfied with anything short of the most dreadful vengeance. The conduct of Louis was too reprehensible to be passed over unnoticed, and Mr. Paine therefore voted that he should be tried; but when the question whether he should be put to death, was brought forward, he opposed it by every argument in his power. His exertions were, however, ineffectual, and sentence of death was passed, though by a very small majority. Mr. Paine lost no opportunity of protesting against this extreme measure; when the question, whether the sentence should be carried into execution, was discussed, he combated the proposition with great energy. As he was not well versed in the French language, he wrote or spoke in English, which one of the secretaries translated.

It is evident that his reasoning was thought very persuasive, since those who had heard the speeches of Buzot, Condorcet, and Brissot, on the same side of the question, without interruption, broke out in murmurs, while Paine's opinion was being translated; and Marat, at length, losing all patience, exclaimed that Paine was a quaker, whose mind was so contracted by the narrow principles of his religion, that he was incapable of the liberality that was requisite for condemning men to death. This shrewd argument not being thought convincing,

the secretary continued to read, that 'the execution of the sentence, instead of an act of justice, would appear to all the world, and particularly to their allies, the American States, as an act of vengeance, and that if he were sufficiently master of the French language, he would, in the name of his brethren of America, present a petition at their bar against the execution of the sentence.' Marat and his associates said that these could not possibly be the sentiments of Thomas Paine, and that the assembly was imposed upon by a false translation. On comparing it with the original, however, it was found to be correct.

The only practical effect of Paine's leniency to the king was that of rendering himself an object of hatred among the most violent and now dominant actors in the revolution. They found that he could not be induced to participate in their acts of cruelty; they dreaded the opposition which he might make to their sanguinary deeds, and they therefore marked him out as a victim to be sacrificed the first opportunity.

The humanity of Mr. Paine was, indeed, one of the most prominent features in his character, and he exercised it, whether on public or private occasions. Of his strict attention to his public duty in this respect, even at the hazard of his own safety, we have just seen a convincing proof in his opposition to the execution of the king; and of his humane and charitable disposition in private matters, the following circumstances are sufficient to warrant the most unqualified conclusion.

Mr. Paine was dining one day with about twenty friends, at a coffee-house in the *Palais Egalite*, now the *Palais Royal*, when, unfortunately for the harmony of the company, a captain in the English service contrived to introduce himself. The military gentleman was a strenuous supporter of the English system of government, and of course, a decided enemy of the French Revolution. After the cloth was removed, the conversation turned on the state of affairs in England, and the means which had been adopted by the government to check political knowledge. Mr. Paine gave his opinion very freely, and much to the satisfaction of every one present, except Captain Grimstone, who finding himself cornered, answered his arguments by calling him a traitor to his country, and applying to him other terms equally opprobrious. Mr. Paine treated his abuse with much good humor, which rendered the captain so furious that he struck him a violent blow. But the cowardice of this behavior on the part of a stout young man, toward a person up-

ward of sixty years of age, was not the worst part of the affair. The captain had struck a citizen-deputy of the convention, which was an insult to the whole nation; the offender was hurried into custody, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Paine prevented him from being massacred on the spot.

The convention had decreed the punishment of death to any one who should be convicted of striking a deputy: Mr. Paine was therefore placed in a very unpleasant situation. He immediately applied to Barrere, president of the committee of public safety, for a passport for his imprudent adversary. His request being, after much hesitation, complied with, he still had considerable difficulty in procuring his liberation; but even this was not all of which the nobility of his nature was capable. The captain was without friends, and penniless; and Mr. Paine generously supplied him with money to defray his travelling expenses, home to England.

A Major Munroe, who lodged at the same hotel with Mr. Paine, and whose business it was to inform Pitt and the ministry of England, of what was going on in France, remaining after the war was declared, was thrown into prison. He applied to Mr. Paine, who, by great exertion, procured his release.

The reign of terror had now fairly begun, and Mr. Paine's humane disposition conspicuously marked him for one of its victims.

In alluding to the dreadful proceedings which were making such havoc among the best patriots of France, he says:—

"As for myself, I used to find some relief by walking alone in the garden after it was dark, and cursing with hearty good will the authors of that terrible system that had turned the character of the revolution I had been proud to defend.

I went but little to the convention, and then only to make my appearance; because I found it impossible for me to join in their tremendous decrees, and useless and dangerous to oppose them. My having voted and spoken extensively, more so than any other member, against the execution of the king, had already fixed a mark upon me: neither dared any of my associates in the convention to translate, and speak in French for me anything I might have dared to write. Pen and ink were then of no use to me. No good could be done by writing, and no printer dared to print; and whatever I might have written for

my private amusement, as anecdotes of the times, would have been continually exposed to be examined, and tortured into any meaning that the rage of party might fix upon it; and as to softer subjects, my heart was in distress at the fate of my friends, and my harp was hung upon the weeping willows."

But the gentle, conciliating, and open manner of Mr. Paine rendered it impossible to impeach his political conduct, and this was the reason why he remained so long at liberty. The first attempt that was made against him, was by means of an act of the convention, which decreed that all persons residing in France, who were born in England, should be imprisoned; but as Mr. Paine was a member of the convention, and had been adopted a "citizen of France," the decree did not extend to him. A motion was afterward made by Bourdon de l'Oise, for expelling all foreigners from the convention. It was evident from the speech of the mover, that Mr. Paine was the principal object aimed at, and as soon as the expulsion was effected, an application was made to the two committees of public safety, of which Robespierre was the dictator, and he was immediately arrested under the former decree for imprisoning persons born in England. On his way to the Luxembourg, he contrived to call upon his intimate friend and associate, Joel Barlow, with whom he left the manuscript of the first part of the "Age of Reason." This work he intended to be the last of his life, but the proceedings in France, during the year 1793, induced him to delay it no longer.

At the time when the "Age of Reason" was written, Mr. Paine was in daily expectation of being sent to the guillotine, where many of his friends had already perished; the doctrines, therefore, which it inculcates, must be regarded as the sentiments of a dying man. This is a conclusive proof that the work was not the result of a wish to deceive. Mr. Paine had measured his time with such precision, that he had not finished the book more than six hours, before he was arrested and conveyed to the Luxembourg.

Had such a singularly favorable coincidence as this happened in the transactions of a Christian theological writer, it would undoubtedly have been ascribed to the interpostion of Divine Providence.

After Mr. Paine had remained in prison about three weeks, the Americans residing in Paris went in a body to the convention and demanded the liberation of their fellow-citizen. The

following is a copy of the address presented by them to the president of the convention; an address which sufficiently shows the high estimation in which Mr. Paine was at this time held by the citizens of the United States:—

"Citizens! The French nation had invited the most illustrious of all foreign nations to the honor of representing her.

"Thomas Paine, the apostle of liberty in America, a profound and valuable philosopher, a virtuous and esteemed citizen, came to France and took a seat among you. Particular circumstances rendered necessary the decree to put under arrest all the English residing in France.

"Citizens! Representatives! We come to demand of you Thomas Paine, in the name of the friends of liberty, and in the name of the Americans, your brothers and allies; was there anything more wanted to obtain our demand we would tell you. Do not give to the leagued despots the pleasure of seeing Paine in irons. We inform you that the seals put upon the papers of Thomas Paine have been taken off, that the committee of general safety examined them, and far from finding among them any dangerous propositions, they only found the love of liberty which characterized him all his lifetime, that eloquence of nature and philosophy which made him the friend of mankind, and those principles of public morality which merited the hatred of kings, and the affection of his fellow citizens.

"In short, citizens! if you permit us to restore Thomas Paine to the embraces of his fellow-citizens, we offer to pledge ourselves as securities for his conduct during the short time he shall remain in France."

The Americans who presented the foregoing address, received for answer, that "Mr. Paine was born in England," and it was also hinted to them that their attempt to reclaim him as a citizen of the United States, could not be listened to, in consequence of its *not being authorized by the American government.*

I wish the reader to particularly note what I have here italicised, as I shall hereafter refer to it in a very important connection.

Soon after this, all communication between the prisoners and their friends was cut off by an order of the police; and the only hope that during six months, remained to Mr. Paine, was, that the American minister would be authorized to inquire into the cause of his imprisonment. "But even this hope," Mr. Paine observes, "in the state in which matters were daily arriv-

ing, was too remote to have any consolatory effect; and I contented myself with the thought that I might be remembered when it would be too late."

During this long imprisonment he amused himself by writing a variety of pieces, both in poetry and prose, some of which have since been published. He also wrote a considerable portion of the second part of the "Age of Reason."

When he had been in prison about eight months, he was seized with a violent fever, which nearly deprived him of life, and from the effects of which he never perfectly recovered. This fever, which rendered him insensible for more than a month, was, however, the means of preserving his life; for had he remained in health, he would no doubt have been dragged before the tribunal, and sent to the guillotine.

After the fall of Robespierre, Mr. Paine, seeing several of his fellow-prisoners set at liberty, began to conceive hopes of his own release, and addressed a memorial to Mr. Monroe, the American minister, on the subject.

The following is a copy of Mr. Monroe's letter to Mr. Paine on this occasion:—

PARIS, *September 18, 1794.*

DEAR SIR,—I was favored, soon after my arrival here, with several letters from you, and more latterly with one in the character of a memorial upon the subject of your confinement: and should have answered them at the times they were respectively written, had I not concluded you would have calculated with certainty upon the deep interest I take in your welfare, and the pleasure with which I shall embrace every opportunity in my power to serve you. I should still pursue the same course, and for reasons which must obviously occur, if I did not find that you are disquieted with apprehensions upon interesting points, and which justice to you and our country equally forbid you should entertain. You mention that you have been informed you are not considered as an American citizen by the Americans, and that you have likewise heard that I had no instructions respecting you by the government. I doubt not the person who gave you the information meant well, but I suspect he did not even convey accurately his own ideas on the first point: for I presume the most he could say is, that you had likewise become a French citizen, and which by no means deprives you of being an American one. Even this, however,

may be doubted, I mean the acquisition of citizenship in France, and I confess you have said much to show that it has not been made. I really suspect that this was all that the gentleman who wrote to you, and those Americans he heard speak upon the subject, meant. It becomes my duty, however, to declare to you, that I consider you as an American citizen, and that you are considered universally in that character by the people of America. As such you are entitled to my attention; and so far as it can be given, consistently with those obligations which are mutual between every government and even transient passengers, you shall receive it.

The congress have never decided upon the subject of citizenship, in a manner to regard the present case. By being with us through the revolution, you are of our country as absolutely as if you had been born there, and you are no more of England than every native American is. This is the true doctrine in the present case, so far as it becomes complicated with any other consideration. I have mentioned it to make you easy upon the only point which could give you any disquietude.

It is necessary for me to tell you how much all your countrymen—I speak of the great mass of the people—are interested in your welfare. They have not forgotten the history of their own revolution, and the difficult scenes through which they passed; nor do they review its several stages without reviving in their bosoms a due sensibility of the merits of those who served them in that great and arduous conflict. The crime of ingratitude has not yet stained, and I trust never will stain, our national character. You are considered by them, as not only having rendered important services in our own revolution, but as being, on a more extensive scale, the friend of human rights and a distinguished and able advocate in favor of public liberty. To the welfare of Thomas Paine the Americans are not, nor can they be, indifferent.

Of the sense which the president has always entertained of your merits, and of his friendly disposition towards you, you are too well assured to require any declaration of it from me. That I forward his wishes in seeking your safety is what I well know: and this will form an additional obligation on me to perform what I should otherwise consider as a duty.

You are in my opinion, at present, menaced by no kind of danger. To liberate you will be an object of my endeavors, and as soon as possible. But you must, until that event shall be

accomplished, bear your situation with patience and fortitude; you will likewise have the justice to recollect that I am placed here upon a difficult theatre, many important objects to attend to, and with few to consult. It becomes me in pursuit of those, so to regulate my conduct with respect to each, as to the manner and the time, as will, in my judgment, be best calculated to accomplish the whole.

With great esteem and respect consider me personally your friend.

JAMES MONROE.

Mr. Paine was released from prison on the 4th November, 1794, having been in confinement for eleven months.

After his liberation, he was kindly *invited* to the house of Mr. Monroe, where he remained for about eighteen months. The following extract from one of his letters, written after his return to America, is a highly interesting description of his situation while in prison, and of another narrow escape which he had in addition to the one already noticed.

'I was one of the nine members that composed the first committee of constitution. Six of them have been destroyed. Syeyes and myself have survived. He by bending with the times, and I by not bending. The other survivor joined Robespierre, and signed with him the warrant of my arrestation. After the fall of Robespierre, he was seized and imprisoned in his turn, and sentenced to transportation. He has since apologized to me for having signed the warrant, by saying, he felt himself in danger and was obliged to do it.

Herault Sechelles, an acquaintance of Mr. Jefferson, and a good patriot, was my *suppliant* as member of the committee of constitution; that is, he was to supply my place, if I had not accepted or had resigned, being next in number of votes to me. He was imprisoned in the Luxembourg with me, was taken to the tribunal and the guillotine, and I, his principal, was left.

There were but two foreigners in the convention, Anacharsis Cloots* and myself. We were both put out of the convention

* J. B. DeCloots, a Prussian Baron, known since the revolution by the name of Aracharsis Cloots, was born at Cleves, on the 24th of June, 1755, and became the possessor of a considerable fortune.

In September, 1792, he was deputed from the Oise to the Convention.

In the same year he published a work entitled "The Universal Republic, wherein he laid it down as a p inciple "that the people were the sovereign of the world—nay, that it was God"—"that fools alone believed in a Supreme

by the same vote, arrested by the same order, and carried to prison together the same night. He was taken to the guillotine, and I was again left. Joel Barlow was with us when we went to prison.

Joseph Lebon, one of the vilest characters that ever existed, and who made the streets of Arras run with blood, was my suppliant as member of the convention for the department of the Pais de Calais. When I was put out of the convention he came and took my place. When I was liberated from prison, and voted again into the convention, he was sent to the same prison and took my place there, and he went to the guillotine instead of me. He supplied my place all the way through.

One hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillotined the next day, of which I know I was to have been one; and the manner in which I escaped that fate is curious, and has all the appearance of accident.

The room in which I was lodged was on the ground floor, and one of a long range of rooms under a gallery, and the door of it opened outward and flat against the wall; so that when it was open the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when it was shut. I had three comrades, fellow-prisoners with me, Joseph Vanhuile, of Bruges, since president of the municipality of that town, Michael Robins, and Bastini, of Louvain.

When persons by scores and hundreds were to be taken out of prison for the guillotine, it was always done in the night, and those who performed that office had a private mark or signal by which they knew what rooms to go to, and what number to take. We, as I have said, were four, and the door of our room was marked unobserved by us, with that number in chalk; but it happened, if happening is a proper word, that the mark was put on when the door was open and flat against the wall, and thereby came on the inside when we shut it at

---

Being," &c. He soon afterwards fell under the suspicions of Robespierre, was arrested as a Hebertist, and condemned to death on the 24th of March, 1794. He died with great firmness, and on his way to execution lectured Hebert on materialism, "to prevent him," as he said, "from yielding to religious feelings in his last moments." He even asked to be executed after all his accomplices, in order that he might have time "to establish certain principles during the fall of their heads."—*Biographe Moderne.*

See, also, for a fuller account of Baron De Cloots, Thier's "History of the French Revolution."

night, and the destroying angel passsed by it. A few days after this Robespierre fell, and the American ambassador arrived and reclaimed me and invited me to his house.

During the whole of my imprisonment, prior to the fall of Robespierre, there was no time when I could think my life worth twenty-four hours, and my mind was made up to meet its fate. The Americans in Paris went in a body to the convention to reclaim me, but without success. There was no party among them with respect to me. My only hope then rested on the government of America that it would remember me. But the icy heart of ingratitude, in whatever man it may be placed, has neither feeling nor sense of honor. The letter of Mr. Jefferson has served to wipe away the reproach, and done justice to the mass of the people of America."

Soon after Mr. Paine's release, the convention, by a unanimous vote, reinstated him in the seat he had formerly occupied. Mr. Paine did not refuse, being resolved to show that he was not to be terrified, and that his principles were neither to be perverted by disgust nor weakened by misfortune.

His bodily health was very much impaired by his long confinement, and in September following he was taken dangerously ill. He states that he had felt the approach of his disorder for some time, which occasioned him to hasten to a conclusion of the second part of the "Age of Reason." This work was published at Paris, early in 1795, and was very shortly afterward reprinted both in England and the United States.

The "Age of Reason" called forth a great many replies, but the only one whose fame has outlived its author, is the Bishop of Llandaff's "Apology for the Bible." Even this is in defiance of the plainest rules of reason and logic, and would have shared the fate of its companions in the same cause, if it had been written by an ordinary person.

The advocates of the Christian faith were themselves so conscious of the imperfections of their system, and placed so little reliance on the Bishop's arguments, that they commenced a prosecution against Mr. Williams, the publisher of the "Age of Reason." They retained Mr. Erskine on the part of the crown, who made every effort to procure a verdict. Mr. Kyd made an ingenious and able reply, in behalf of the defendant, but the jury, being special, readily found him guilty, June 4, 1797. Mr. Paine addressed a letter to Mr. Erskine on the proceedings of this trial, in which he ridiculed the absurdity of

discussing theological subjects before such men as special juries are generally composed of, and cited fresh evidence in support of his former arguments against the truth of the Bible.

But, although the anti-biblical works of Mr. Paine were well able to withstand the Bishop of Llandaff's attacks, and have unquestionably made a greater number of *mere unbelievers* than have those of any other writer, they strongly remind those who comprehend the all-important *materialistic* significancy which underlies "supernaturalism," of the suggestions which their author so sensibly threw out, in his letter to Mr. Erskine, with respect to the abilities of juries to deal with theological matters.

Paine himself took far less pride in his Theological writings than in any of his others. This is too observable to need to be pointed out in detail. He had comparatively such small expectations with respect to the good which he believed he had the talents to perform by meddling with "supernaturalism," that he postponed the execution of that part of his life's mission to the latter end of his career; and it is worthy of note, that in his will, he requested that it should be engraved on his tomb-stome, not that he was the author of the "The Age of Reason," or of the "Examination of the Prophecies;" but of "*Common Sense.*"

In the perfected, or even *half regenerate* future, the author of "*the world is my country; to do good my religion,*" though he had never written "Common Sense," "The Crisis," or "Rights of Man;"—nay, though he had never written another line, will stand higher than will the ablest mere exposer and denouncer of error and delusion, that ever handled a pen.

There is, it must be confessed, in Mr. Paine's treatment of the great question involved in anthropomorphism, or "theology," nothing of the profundity of Feuerbach, or of the thoroughness, and searching and learned inquiry concerning the mythical substructure of Christianity, which so eminently distinguishes Strauss; and there is but little of the careful research of Volney, Dupuis and Robert Taylor, in either the "Age of Reason" or the "Examination of The Prophecies." Their author is altogether too deficient in the bland and winning persuasiveness of Greg, and has not an overstock of the candor, and *patient* criticism of Macnaught.

For proof of this, compare Paine's theological masterpieces, just named, with Strauss's "Critical Examination of the Life

of Jesus," Volney's "Ruins of Empires," and "New Researches on Ancient History," Dupuis's "Origine de tous les Cultes,"* Taylor's "Diegesis," "Astronomical-Theological Sermons," and "Devil's Pulpit," Greg's "Creed of Christendom; Its Foundations and superstructure," Macnaught on "The Doctrine of Inspiration," and that natural history of "supernaturalism,"—Feuerbach's "Essence of Christianity."

There is nothing like constructive revolution in Mr. Paine's attacks on tho ecclesiastical hierarchy which has been, notwithstanding its faults, and is *now, and for some time past*, abominable abuses, the nurse of civilization—the initiator of human progress.

But there is, in the effects of his attacks on venerable abuses, that which is *fast neccessitating constructive revolution.*

Still, it is to be regretted that so many of those whom Mr. Paine's caustic argument put in more zealous than formidable battle array against priestcraft, run away with the idea, so unjust and humiliating to human nature, that the whole gospel system was, from the beginning, but a nefarious scheme of priests and kings, whereby to destroy liberty; that the Church has *always* been but a hypocritical and tyrannical organization. For in consequence of these views, they think that they have found out all that need be known with respect to the great question of *man's instinctive faith;* and vainly imagine, that through the power of reason alone, all the temples of superstition can be demolished, or shaved down to common school-houses; and think that this will make the world about as good as it is capable of becoming.

The plain truth is, that Mr. Paine's *theological* views are as superficial as his *religious* conceptions are profound. [It will be recollected that "*to do good*," was Mr. Paine's religion.] His belief in a supernatural "God," in "happiness *after death*," and in "some punishment for the wicked," though immeasurably less atrocious than the Judaistic and Paganistic Christianism which he combatted, are not a whit more intelligible; and had "The Age of Reason" been written by some sharp-witted magazine critic, instead of by the author of "The Crisis," "Common Sense," and "Rights of Man;"—or by some obscure individual, instead of by the companion of, and co-worker with,

* Published by Mr. Gilbert Vale.
The other works here referred to and also "The Age of Reason," and "Examination of The Prophecies," are published by C. Blanchard.

Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Lafayette, its notoriety never would have reached the height to which it immediately arose, and which, owing to clerical persecution, and to the abominable injustice and ingratitude with which Paine has been treated, it will no doubt gain upon for some time to come.

But we must, in full justice to Thomas Paine, take into account the fact, that his theology is susceptible of a very liberal interpretation. I, too, *materialist though I am*,* believe in a God; a God as infinite as is all of which we can conceive; ay, and as *real;* a God as almighty as is materiality; which is at once both agent and act, and out of whose presence we cannot go even in thought, will prove to be, through that only intelligible miracle,—*development.*

I believe, furthermore, in the punishment of the wicked; and that, too, *after death.* Nay, I *know* that the punishment of *all sin* is *inevitable.* Is not that monster of iniquity, society, though dead and all but rotten in "trespasses and sins," undergoing the very torments of the damned?

I hope for, nay, I *know* that I shall have, happiness *after death;*—that every particle of *me* will, through chemical change, and the refinements which nature is with rapidly increasing speed, elaborating, go to form *material beings* as much happier than any which now exist, as "glorified saints and angels" are imagined to be.

But Mr Paine has won such laurels through his political writings, that he can richly afford to yield the palm with respect to theology; not that he has not, though negatively, done good service, even in this field. His theological writings have cleared the way for the *practical* and *positive* in social affairs, by showing that reason, or speculativeness, though of importance in *starting* the march of human progress, is utterly inefficient in the all important respects of the *motive* and the *creative* power, necessary to speed that progress *to its goal.*

The "Age of Reason" *negatively* prepared the way for the introduction of science and art into social architecture; for the inauguration of the knowable, the practical, the humane, the

* Of all the Deistical works that I have examined, none appear to me to be less inconsistent than the one by Henri Disdier, avocat, published at Geneva, in 1859. His remarks on the clergy's great lever, education, ought to be read by every reformer. The work is entitled—"Conciliation Rationnelle du Droit et du Devoir." It appears to me that M. Disdier has omitted no argument that can be adduced to support the proposition that there exists a "Supernatural God," or "Dieu Personnel."

efficient, in place of the mysterious, the speculative, the vindictive, the *provisional*, and otherwise *abortive*.

I know that these views will be somewhat distasteful to many of Mr. Paine's admirer's; but I have undertaken to give an impartial history, and therefore cannot let my own admiration or that of others for the great man I am writing about, blind me to the great truth, that, till the perfection point be gained, means, even those as powerful as Mr. Paine used, must, as fast as they exhaust their efficacy, be thrust aside for those of greater and greater potency.

Opinionism has long since fulfilled its function in the social organism, and therefore cannot too soon be rejected, along with its correlative, moralism, and that now main dependence of vice, —virtue. Principle has become an excrescence, and should be immediately expelled for *enlightened selfishness*. Principle is the barricade behind which hypocrisy hides. It encumbers the path through which *actual progress* ought to have a free passage.

But to return to the thread of this history:—

In April, 1795, a committee was appointed to form another new constitution (the former one having been abolished), and the report of this committee was brought forward on the 23rd of June following, by Boissy d'Anglais.

In 1795, Mr. Paine wrote a speech in opposition to several of the articles of the new constitution which had been presented for adoption, which was translated and read to the convention by Citizen Lanthera, on the seventh of July. He particularly contended against the unjust distinction that was attempted to be made between direct and indirect taxes. Whatever weight his objections ought to have carried, they were not listened to by the convention, and the constitution of Boissy d'Anglais was adopted. By this decree the convention was formally dissolved; and as Mr. Paine was not afterward re-elected, it also terminated his public functions in France.

The reign of terror* having somewhat subsided, Mr. Paine

* Let me not be misunderstood, in speaking as I have, and shall, of demagogues, priests, and "oppressors" generally. I by no means approve of the avalanche of blame in which Robespierre has been overwhelmed. He and his colleagues were but the instruments of an infuriated populace which an unfortunate train of circumstances had let loose upon those whom equally unfortunate causes had made their oppressors.

It is highly worthy of attention, that all the blood shed during the long "infidel" "reign of terror," amounted to but little more than half what had flown in a single day (St. Bartholomew's), under the reign of supernaturalistic terror. The whole number guillotined by order of the Revolutionary

resumed his pen. About the time when he brought out the second part of the "Age of Reason," he published several pamphlets on subjects less likely to inflame the passions of the bigoted and ignorant; the principal of these are his "Dissertation on first Principles of Government," "Agrarian Justice opposed to Agrarian Law," and the "Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance." The first of these is a continuation of the arguments advanced in the "Rights of Man;" the second is a plan for creating in every country a national fund "to pay to every person when arrived at the age of twenty-one years, the sum of fifteen pounds sterling, to enable him or her to begin the world; and also ten pounds sterling, per annum, during life, to every person now living of the age of fifty years, and to all others, when they shall arrive at that age, to enable them to live without wretchedness, in old age, and to go decently out of the world."

In 1796, he published at Paris a "Letter to General Washington." The principal subject of this letter was the treaty which had recently been concluded between the United States and Great Britain. From the articles of the treaty, Mr. Paine contends, that those who concluded it had compromised the honor of America, and the safety of her commerce, from a disposition to cringe to the British ministry. The cold neglect of Washington toward Mr. Paine during his imprisonment, forms likewise a prominent subject of the letter, and but for this circumstance, it is probable that it would never have appeared. Notwithstanding the high opinion which Washington professed to entertain of his services in behalf of American independence, he abandoned him in a few years afterward to the mercy of Robespierre, and during his imprisonment of eleven months he never made an effort to release him. This was not the treatment which the author of "The Crisis" deserved at the hands of Washington, either as a private individual, or as president of

---

tribunal was 18,603, viz:—Nobles, 1,278. Noble women, 750. Wives of laborers and artisans, 1,467. Religeuses, 350. Priests, 1,135. Common persons, not noble, 13,623.

The lowest estimate of the number of victims of the St. Bartholomew massacre, is 25,000; but there is every reason for supposing that the number was not less than 30,000.

In six weeks time, the supernaturalistically misguided Duke a, instigated the murder, for conscience sake, of 18,000 people in the kingdom of the Netherlands.

Is it not time that the murderous system of blame and punishment, together with their correlate, principle, was superseded?

the United States. Exclusive of Mr. Paine's being a citizen of the United States, and consequently entitled to the protection of its government, he had rendered her services which none but the ungrateful could forget; he had therefore no reason to expect that her chief magistrate would abandon him in the hour of peril. However deserving of our admiration some parts of General Washington's conduct towards Mr. Paine may be, his behaviour in this instance certainly reflects no honor upon his character; and we are utterly at a loss for an excuse for it, on recollecting that when the American residents of Paris demanded Paine's release, the answer of the convention mainly was, that the demand could not be listened to "*in consequence of its not being authorized by the American government.*"

Mr. Paine regarded the United States as his home; and although his spirit of universal philanthrophy, his republican principles, and his resolution in attacking fraud in politics and superstition in religion, rendered him rather a citizen of the world than of any particular country, he had domestic feelings and *pivotal* attachments. During his residence in Europe, he always declared his intention of returning to America; the following extract from a letter of his to a lady at New York will show the affectionate regard which he cherished for the country whose affairs were the means of first launching him into public life:—

"You touch me on a very tender point when you say, *that my friends on your side of the water cannot be reconciled to the idea of my abandoning America even for my native England.* They are right. I had rather see my horse, Button, eating the grass of Bordertown, or Morrissania, than see all the pomp and show of Europe.

"A thousand years hence, for I must indulge a few thoughts, perhaps in less, America may be what England now is. The innocence of her character, that won the hearts of all nations in her favor, may sound like a romance, and her inimitable virtue as if it had never been. The ruins of that liberty, which thousands bled to obtain, may just furnish materials for a village tale, or extort a sigh from rustic sensibility; while the fashionable of that day, enveloped in dissipation, shall deride the principle and deny the fact.

"When we contemplate the fall of empires, and the extinction of the nations of the ancient world, we see but little more to excit our regret than the mouldering ruins of pompous palaces,

magnificent monuments, lofty pyramids, and walls and towers of the most costly workmanship: but when the empire of America shall fall, the subject for contemplative sorrow will be infinitely greater than crumbling brass or marble can inspire. It will not then be said, Here stood a temple of vast antiquity, here rose a Babel of invisible height, or there a palace of sumptuous extravagance; but here! ah! painful thought! the noblest work of human wisdom, the greatest scene of human glory, the fair cause of freedom, rose and fell! Read this, then ask if I forgot America."

In 1797, a society was formed in Paris, under the title of "Theophilanthropists." Of this society, Mr. Paine, was one of the principal founders. More of this anon.

This year Mr. Paine published a "Letter to the People of France; on the Events of the eighteenth Fructidor."

About the middle of the same year he also wrote a letter to Camille Jordan, one of the council of five hundred, respecting his report on the priests, public worship, and bells. "It is want of feeling," says he, "to talk of priests and bells, while so many infants are perishing in the hospitals, and aged and infirm poor in the streets from the want of necessaries The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration."

The publication of his deistical opinions lost Mr. Paine a great number of his friends, and, it is possible, that this might be one of the causes of General Washington's indifference. The clear, open, and bold manner in which he had exposed the fallacy of long established opinions, called forth the indignation of the whole order of priesthood both in England and America, and there was scarcely a house of devotion in either country, which did not ring with pious execrations against the author of the "Age of Reason," The apostles of superstition witnessed with amazement and terror the immense circulation of the work, and trembled at the possibility that men might come to think for themselves.*

---

*The late Mr. George H. Evans (one of the first movers of the land reform question) was the first collector and publisher of Paine's Works in this country; and the late Frances Wright d'Arusmont rendered, and Mrs. E. L. Rose is now rendering, most efficient aid in disseminating such views of these works as the popular mind is capable of taking.

The constructive revolutionist must admire the stand she has so bravely

On leaving the house of Mr. Monroe, Paine boarded in the family of Nicholas Bonneville, a gentleman in good circumstances, and editor of a political paper, the "Bouche de Fer."

In 1797, the society of "Theophilanthropists" was formed in Paris. Men capable of any reflection began to see how utterly monstrous was the attempt to dispense with religion—with a universal higher law to which to appeal—with something to satisfy, or at least prevent from being utterly discouraged, the instinctive aspirations of the human heart. Robspierre objected to atheism as aristocratic; but Paine saw somewhat further than this, and Larévillière, a member of the Directory, was impressed with the necessity of a system which should rival the catholic church itself. The idea was supremely great, and lacked only the Comtean conception of science to make it a success. As it was, however, it proved a worse failure than has even Christianism. *Pure* Deism is not at all more intelligible than is that mixture of Deism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Paganism, called Christianity; and the cold moralism which is attached to the one God system, the human heart instinctively abhors. Paine, and all the other doctors of divinity with whom he was in unison, were far behind even Mahomet, or Joe Smith, in respect to theology.

Haüy, a brother of the eminent crystallogist, assembled the first society of Theophilanthropists. They held their meetings on Sunday, and had their manual of worship and hymn-book.

---

and ably taken with respect to woman's rights, however exceptional some of the measures she has advocated may be considered.

But there is no danger that the legitimate object of man's adoration.—woman—*can* be drawn into that maelstrom of abomination,—caucus-and-ballot-boxism, and if I mistake not, Mrs. Rose does not press the extension of "*elective franchise*," to her sex quite as vigorously as she used to. At all events, she is doing good service to the cause of human emancipation; she has been a pioneer in a reform on which further progress importantly depends; for which she deserves the hearty "thanks of man and woman."

Abner Kneeland was, I believe, the first editor of the first "openly avowed Infidel paper" in the United States,—the "Boston Investigator;" now edited by Horace Seaver, Esq.

As to Theodore Parker, his exertions in the cause of free inquiry are of world-wide notoriety: and I will here mention that "The Evidences against Christianity," by John S. Hittell, should be the hand-book of all those who look to reason, free discussion, and to an exposure of falsehood and error, for the salvation of the human race.

The services which Mr. Joseph Barker has rendered the liberal cause will not soon be forgotten. His debate with Dr. Berg floors Christianity to the utmost that *argument* can. But I much prefer the valedictory letter which he published in the "Investigator," previous to his departure for Europe. Evidently, the writer is beginning to see that something more than mere negativism is needed to put down superstition.

Robespierre had, three years before, given a magnificent fete in honor of *l'Etre Suprême*, and Paine now delivered a discourse before one of the Theophilanthropist congregations, in which he attempted to blend science and "supernaturalism." That some parts of his discourse would have done honor to an Orthodox divine, the following extracts will attest:—"Do we want to contemplate His [God's] power? We see it in the immensity of the creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate His mercy? We see it in His not withholding His abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not written books, but the Scriptures called the Creation."

The finale of the miserable political and religious farce which had been played in France, was, that, in 1799, Bonaparte sent a file of grenadiers to turn both the political and theological quacks out of their halls; and the sooner some Bonaparte does the same thing in the United States, the sooner will the cause of liberty be at least delivered from the management of those who are insulting, disgracing, and treacherously betraying it.

Whilst writing this, the two great parties of spoil-seekers in the United States, have been causing for, and have at length decided on, two individuals out of some thirty millions, one of whom is to be demagogism's cat's-paw general for the next four years.

The qualifications of one of these candidates for the presidential chair, consist in his having been a "farm-laborer, a common workman in a saw-mill, and a boatman on the Wabash and Mississippi rivers;" a wood-chopper, a hunter, a soldier in the Black Hawk war, a clerk in a store, and finally a sham-law manufacturer and monger—a member of a legislature, and a lawyer. The qualifications of his opponent on the political-race-course, are probably about as different *in respect to value*, from those just enumerated, as fiddlededum is from fiddlededee.

Those convenient tools of both parties, those chessmen with which the political game is played—*The People*, however have great expectations of *reform* from which ever candidate they *vote* (*they* vote! do they? *Faugh!*) for, provided he is elected. But mark me well, my dear fellow-sufferers; you, and all, except about one in fifty or a hundred of the office-seekers whose thievish fingers itch for the public treasury, are destined

to utter, and most woeful disappointment. Still, I neither *blame* the demagogues nor yourselves. In the concluding sentences of this history, I shall tell you where the fault lies; for I hope, that the political scamps who, in this country, are making the name of freedom a scorn and a derision throughout the rest of the world, will be eliminated by those who will make liberty an *actuality*. *How* this may be done, I claim to have demonstrated in "The Religion of Science," and "Essence of Science."

Throughout Paine's political writings, notwithstanding their popularistic dressings, there runs a tone entirely condemnatory of demagogism, and highly suggestive of *social science and art*. And there is no question but that the miserable abortion in which the liberty-agitation *seemed* to terminate in France, and the failing aspect which it took on in America, even in his day, all but "burst his mighty heart," and made him somewhat careless, though far from slovenly, with respect to his person.

Paine's opposition to the atheists, on the one hand, and to the cruelty of those who, headed by Robespierre, had instituted the worship of the "Supreme Being" on the other, had gradually rendered him unpopular in France. His remittances from the United States not being very regular, M. Bonneville added generosity to the nobleness which he, considering the circumstances displayed, in opening his door to Mr. Paine, by lending him money whenever he wanted it.

This kindness, Paine had soon both the opportunity and the means of reciprocating; for majority absolutism had now become so unbearably despotic, so exceedingly morbific to the social organism in France, that to save civilization even from destruction, Bonaparte had to be invested with supreme power in the State, and the *noninally* free press of M. Bonneville was consequently stopped.

Mr. Paine's liberty mission in France, having now evidently failed [always remembering that nothing in nature is an *absolute* failure—that progres is the constant rule and the *seeming* contrary but an aberration], he at once resolved to return to the United States, where he offered an asylum to M. Bonneville and family; in consequence of which, Madame Bonneville and her three sons soon left Paris for New York.

Owing to some cause or other, but not to the one which Paine's slanderers were afterwards mulcted in damages, even in a Christian court of Justice, for assigning, M. Bonneville did

not accompany them. The eldest son returned to his father in Paris; but Mr. Paine amply provided for the maintenance of Madame Bonneville and her two sons who remained in America.

At Paris, such personages as the Earl of Lauderdale, Dr. Moore, Brissot, the Marquis de Chatelet le Roi, General Miranda, Capt. Imlay, Joel Barlow, Mr. and Mrs. Stone, and Mary Wollstonecraft,* sought the honor of Mr. Paine's company.

That Mr. Paine's eloquence and power of reasoning were unsurpassed even by Cicero, Demosthenes or Daniel Webster, his political writings fully attest.

Before it became known who wrote "Common Sense," it was by some attributed to Dr. Franklin; others insisted that it was by that elegant writer of English,—John Adams.†

"It has been very generally propagated through the continent," says Mr. Adams, "that I wrote this pamphlet. . . . I could not have written anything in so manly and striking a style." This eulogy, be it remembered, was pronounced by one who was so jealous of Paine's credit in the matter of the Declaration of Independence, that, says Randall, in his "Life of Thomas Jefferson," he "spares no occasion to underrate Paine's services, and to assault his opinions and character."‡

Mr. Randall continues:—

"A more effective popular appeal [than 'Common Sense'] never went to the bosoms of a nation. Its tone, its manner, its biblical illusions, its avoidance of all openly impassioned appeals to feeling, and its unanswerable *common sense* were

* Authoress of "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects." A work, the exceeding merit of which has been lost sight of, in its name, since woman's rights have been claimed to consist in the liberty to degrade herself to the level of the politician.

† That that great patriot, John Adams, and many other revolutionary worthies vaguely entertained the idea of Independence before "Common Sense" was published, there can be no doubt. But the question is, who had the courage to first propose the thing, and in a practical shape? That Mr. Adam's prudence predominated over his courage, great as that was, is further deducible from the strong reason there was for the inference that his religious opinions, if openly expressed, would have appeared as far from the orthodox standard, as were those of Paine. See Randall's "Life of Jefferson," on this point.

‡ I have before called the attention of the reader to the fact that Rousseau was, like Paine, an "author hero;" his writings were prominently the text of the French Revolution. I will further remark, that whoever drew up the "Declaration of Independence," has given indisputable evidence of having well studied the "*Contrat Social*" of the author of the "world-famous" "Confessions."

exquisitely adapted to the great audience to which it was addressed; and calm investigation will satisfy the historical student, that its effect in preparing the popular mind for the Declaration of Independence, exceeded that of any other paper, speech, or document made to favor it, and it would scarcely be exaggeration to add, than all other such means put together."

"No writer," says Thomas Jefferson, "has exceeded Paine in ease and familiarity of style, in perspicuity of expression, happiness of elucidation, and in simple and unassuming language."

Says General Washington, in a letter to Joseph Reed (Jan. 31, 1776): "A few more such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense,' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide on the propriety of a separation."

That Paine possessed a very superior degree of mechanical skill, his model for iron-bridges abundantly proves. That his genius for poetry lacked but cultivating, I think will sufficiently appear from the following little effusion, extracted from his correspondence with a lady, afterwards the wife of Sir Robert Smith:—

FROM "THE CASTLE IN THE AIR," TO THE "LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD."

In the region of clouds where the whirlwinds arise,
My castle of fancy was built;
The turrets reflected the blue of the skies,
And the windows with sun-beams were gilt.

The rainbow sometimes, in its beautiful state,
Enamelled the mansion around,
And the figures that fancy in clouds can create,
Supplied me with gardens and ground.

I had grottoes and fountains and orange tree groves,
I had all that enchantment has told;
I had sweet shady walks for the gods and their loves,
I had mountains of coral and gold.

But a storm that I felt not, had risen and rolled,
While wrapt in a slumber I lay:
And when I looked out in the morning, behold!
My castle was carried away.

It passed over rivers, and valleys, and groves—
The world, it was all in my view—
I thought of my friends, of their fates, of their loves,
And often, full often, of you.

At length it came over a beautiful scene,
That nature in silence had made:
The place was but small—but 'twas sweetly serene,
And chequered with sunshine and shade.

I gazed and I envied with painful good will,
And grew tired of my seat in the air:
When all of a sudden my castle stood still,
As if some attraction was there.

Like a lark from the sky it came fluttering down,
And placed me exactly in view—
When who should I meet, in this charming retreat,
This corner of calmness—but you.

Delighted to find you in honor and ease,
I felt no more sorrow nor pain;
And the wind coming fair, I ascended the breeze,
And went back with my castle again.

On the subject of the simplicity of Mr. Paine's habits, and his general amiability, his friend Clio Rickman remarks:—

"He usually rose about seven, breakfasted with his friend Choppin, Johnson, and two or three other Englishmen, and a Monsieur La Borde, who had been an officer in the ci-devant grande du corps, an intolerable aristocrat, but whose skill in mechanics and geometry brought on a friendship between him and Paine; for the undaunted and distinguished ability and firmness with which he ever defended his own opinions when controverted, do not reflect higher honor on him than that unbounded liberality toward the opinion of others which constituted such a prominent feature in his character, and which never suffered mere difference of sentiment, whether political or religious, to interrupt the harmonious intercourse of friendship, or impede the interchanges of knowledge and information.

"After breakfast he usually strayed an hour or two in the garden, where he one morning pointed out the kind of spider whose web furnished him with the first idea of constructing his iron bridge; a fine model of which, in mahogany, is preserved at Paris.

"The little happy circle who lived with him here will ever remember these days with delight: with these select friends he would talk of his boyish days, play at chess, whist, piquet, or cribbage, and enliven the moments by many interesting anecdotes: with these he would sport on the broad and fine gravel walk at the upper end of the garden, and then retire to his bouboir, where he was up to his knees in letters and papers of

various descriptions. Here he remained till dinner-time; and unless he visited Brissot's family, or some particular friend in the evening, which was his frequent custom, he joined again the society of his favorites and fellow-boarders, with whom his conversation was often witty and cheerful, always acute and improving, but never frivolous.

"Incorrupt, straightforward, and sincere, he pursued his political course in France, as everywhere else, let the government or clamor or faction of the day be what it might, with firmness, with clearness, and without a 'shadow of turning.'

"In all Mr. Paine's inquiries and conversations he evinced the strongest attachment to the investigation of truth, and was always for going to the fountain-head for information. He often lamented we had no good history of America, and that the letters written by Columbus, the early navigators, and others to the Spanish court, were inaccessible, and that many valuable documents, collected by Philip II., and deposited with the national archives at Simanca, had not yet been promulgated. He used to speak highly of the sentimental parts of 'Raynal's History.'"

Of course Mr. Paine did not escape the imputation of being "immoral." The cry of "immorality" and "licentiousness" has been raised against everyone who has ever proposed a social system different from the prevailing one, from the time of him who preferred harlotry to phariseeism, to that of Charles Fourier.

Luther no more escaped the accusation of being a sensualist, than did Thomas Paine; and had not Milton written "Paradise Lost," and *professed* the "orthodox" religion, his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce" would have placed him on the same historical page with those reformers Dr. T. L. Nichols, Dr. E. Lazarus, and Stephen Pearl Andrews.*

---

* The first of these gentlemen favored mankind with "Esoteric Anthropology," and "Marriage: its History," &c. The second is the author of "Love vs. Marriage;" and the third took the free love side of the question in the famous discussion on Marriage and Divorce, between himself and the Hon. Horace Greeley, and is author of "The Science of Society," and several other progressive works, and of an admirable system of instruction in the French language.

It is difficult to see how a person of Mr. Greeley's understanding could have taken the side he did in the controversy just alluded to, and also in the renewal of that controversy between himself and the Hon. Robert Dale Owen.

That monogamy, like pologamy, *has served* a useful purpose, everyone

Paine did not, as we have seen, live with his wife; but if he refrained from sexual intercourse, it must have been because he was afraid of what the world might say (a supposition too absurd, in his case, to be entertained for a moment), or because he had little taste for amorous pleasures; or, lastly, because he wanted to show the world that liberalism was such a matter of moon-shine, that it was not even inimical to what a religious system which upholds crucifixion and self-denial, palms off on its dupes for "virtue;" that liberalism has no virtue of its own, and therefore has to borrow and adopt that the very basis of which is supernaturalistic self-enslavement; that free-thinking is a mere speculative, impracticable, abstract sort of freedom, which it would not be "virtuous" to accompany by free acting; that liberty, even in the most important particular (as all physiologists know), is but a mere figment of the imagination, over which to debate or hold free discussions; or, at most, to write songs, plays, and novels about.

But what is most worthy of remark in this connection is, that had the discoverer of the steam-engine, or of the electrical telegraph been a very Rochester, or Cæsar Borgia, the circumstance would not have been mentioned as an objection to a steam-boat passage, or to a telegraphic despatch; and only when sociology is rescued from the wild regions of the speculative

---

capable of tracing progress, can of course see; but how such an one can fail to perceive that these institutions have about equally become worn out, and morbific to the social organism, both in Western Europe and the United States, is to me somewhat mysterious. Are not those crowning curses, (excepting, of course, demagogism) prostitution and pauperism, alarmingly on the increase? And does not the former flourish most, where the cords of matrimony are drawn the tightest?

But the fact that Mr. Greeley magnanimously opened the columns of "The Tribune" to the other side of the question, shows that he had full confidence in the arguments on his side, and this ought to dispel all doubts as to his sincerity, and the uprightness of his intention. It is only hypocrites or downright fools, who wish to have truth, with respect to religious or social questions, suppressed.

Still, I respectfully ask you, Mr. Editor of "The New York Tribune,"—did you during your visit to Mormondom, observe any part of Salt Lake City, in which humanity touched a lower depth than that to which it sinks in our Five Points, and in the vicinity of the junction of Water and Roosevelt-streets? And do you really think, that even in the harem of Brigham Young, female degradation is greater than in the New York *palaces* of harlotry? *En passant*, one of these has just been fitted up, the furniture alone in which cost *thirty thousand dollars!* Yet New York is almost the only State in the Union, wherein exists what Mr. Greeley considers orthodox marriage—marriage, from the bonds of which there is no escape, except through the door of *actual* adultery, natural death, or *murder*; often by poison, but generally through the infliction of *mental agony!*

and becomes an art, will it have a rule of its own; a rule which will free *all the natural passions* from the shackles of *ignorance of how to beneficially gratify them.*

For a reason which will presently appear, I shall now call the readers attention to the letter of Joel Barlow, written in answer to one from that vilest of slanderers and renegados,—James Cheetham. This letter was written to obtain information; nay, not information, but *what might be tortured into appearing such*, with a view to sending forth to a prejudiced world, that tissue of falsehoods which Cheetham had the audacity to palm off on it for the "Life of Thomas Paine."

To JAMES CHEETHAM.

SIR,—I have received your letter calling for information relative to the life of Thomas Paine. It appears to me that this is not the moment to publish the life of that man in this country. His own writings are his best life, and these are not read at present.

The greatest part of the readers in the United States will not be persuaded as long as their present feelings last, to consider him in any other light than as a drunkard and a deist. The writer of his life who should dwell on these topics, to the exclusion of the great and estimable traits of his real character, might, indeed, please the rabble of the age who do not know him; the book might sell; but it would only tend to render the truth more obscure, for the future biographer, than it was before.

But if the present writer should give us Thomas Paine *complete* in all his character as one of the most benevolent and disinterested of mankind, endowed with the clearest perception, an uncommon share of original genius, and the greatest breadth of thought; if this piece of biography should analyze his literary labors, and rank him as he ought to be ranked amongst the brightest and most undeviating luminaries of the age in which he has lived—yet with a mind assailable by flattery, and receiving through that weak side a tincture of vanity which he was too proud to conceal; with a mind, though strong enough to bear him up, and to rise elastic under the heaviest load of oppression, yet unable to endure the contempt of his former friends and fellow-laborers, the rulers of the country that had received his first and greatest services—a mind incapable of looking down with serene compassion, as it ought, on the rude

scoffs of their imitators, a new generation that knows him not; a mind that shrinks from their society, and unhappily seeks refuge in low company, or looks for consolation in the sordid, solitary bottle, until it sinks at last so far below its native elevation as to lose all respect for itself, and to forfeit that of his best friends, disposing these friends almost to join with his enemies, and wish, though from different motives, that he would haste to hide himself in the grave—if you are disposed and prepared to write his life, *thus entire*, to fill up the picture to which these hasty strokes of outline give but a rude sketch with great vacuities, your book may be a useful one for another age, but it will not be relished, nor scarcely tolerated in this.

The biographer of Thomas Paine should not forget his mathematical acquirements, and his mechanical genius. His invention of the *iron bridge*, which led him to Europe in the year 1787, has procured him a great reputation in that branch of science, in France and England, in both which countries his bridge has been adopted in many instances, and is now much in use.

You ask whether he took an oath of allegiance to France. Doubtless the qualification to be a member of the convention required an oath of fidelity to that country, but involved in it no abjuration of his fidelity to this. He was made a French citizen by the same decree with Washington, Hamilton, Priestley, and Sir James Mackintosh.

What Mr. M———— has told you relative to the circumstances of his arrestation by order of Robespierre, is erroneous, at least in one point. Paine did not lodge at the house where he was arrested, but had been dining there with some Americans of whom Mr. M———— may have been one. I never heard before, that Paine was intoxicated that night. Indeed the officers brought him directly to my house, which was two miles from his lodgings, and about as much from the place where he had been dining. He was not intoxicated when he came to me. Their object was to get me to go and assist them to examine Paine's paper. It employed us the rest of that night, and the whole of the next day at Paine's lodgings; and he was not committed to prison till the next evening.

You ask what company he kept—he always frequented the best, both in England and France, till he became the object of calumny in certain American papers (echoes of the English court papers), for his adherence to what he thought the cause

of liberty in France, till he conceived himself neglected and despised by his former friends in the United States. From that moment he gave himself very much to drink, and, consequently, to companions less worthy of his better days.

It is said he was always a peevish person—this is possible. So was Lawrence Sterne, so was Torquato Tasso, so was J. J. Rousseau;* but Thomas Paine, as a visiting acquaintance and as a literary friend, the only points of view in which I knew him, was one of the most instructive men I ever have known. He had a surprising memory and brilliant fancy; his mind was a storehouse of facts and useful observations; he was full of lively anecdote, and ingenious original, pertinent remark upon almost every subject.

He was always charitable to the poor beyond his means, a sure protector and friend to all Americans in distress that he found in foreign countries. And he had frequent occasions to exert his influence in protecting them during the revolution in France. His writings will answer for his patriotism, and his entire devotion to what he conceived to be the best interest and happiness of mankind.

This, sir, is all I have to remark on the subject you mention. Now I have only one request to make, and that would doubtless seem impertinent, were you not the editor of a newspaper; it is, that you will not publish my letter, nor permit a copy of it to be taken.

I am, sir, &c.,

JOEL BARLOW.

KALORAMA, *August 11, 1809.*

"Mr. Barlow," says Mr. Vale, "was in France at the time of Mr. Paine's death, and knew not his habits. Cheetham wrote to him, informed him of his object, mentioned that Paine was *drunken* and *low* in his company towards the latter years of his life, and says he was *informed* that he was *drunk* when taken to prison in France. Now Mr. Barlow does not contradict Cheetham; he could not, as Cheetham had the better opportunity of knowing facts, and Mr. Barlow does not suspect him of falsehood; as who would? He therefore *presumes* Mr.

* The peevishness of the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson is notorious; and David, the "man after God's own heart," was so inveterately peevish as to *sing*, whilst he forced the sweet tones of his harp to accompany the spiteful canticle, "All men *are* liars."

Cheetham correct in the statement, and goes on, not to excuse Mr. Paine, but to present his acknowledged good qualities as a set-off. Then Cheetham publishes this letter, and presents, to a cursory reader, Mr. Joel Barlow as acknowledging Mr. Paine's intemperance, and other infirmities, which had no other foundation than Cheetham's declaration, given to deceive Barlow; who afterwards, as we have seen, gives Barlow's letter to deceive the public."

The late Mr. D. Burger, a respectable watch and clock maker in the City of New York, and who, when a boy, was clerk in the store which furnished Mr. Paine's groceries, personally assured the writer of this, that all the liquor which Mr. Paine bought, both for himself and his friends, at a time, too, when drinking was fashionable, was *one quart a week.*

Before returning to the thread of this narrative, I will call the attention of the reader to the following letter, from Mr. Jefferson, written to Mr. Paine, in answer to one which the latter wrote to him from Paris:—

You express a wish in your letter to return to America by a national ship; Mr. Dawson who brings over the treaty, and who will present you with this letter, is charged with orders to the captain of the *Maryland* to receive and accommodate you back, if you can be ready to depart at such a short warning. You will in general find us returned to sentiments worthy of former times; in these it will be your glory to have steadily labored, and with as much effect as any man living. That you may live long to continue your useful labors, and reap the reward in the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer. Accept the assurances of my high esteem and affectionate attachment.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Mr. Jefferson had, during the election campaign which seated him in the presidential chair, been pronounced an infidel; and, says Randall, in his "Life of Jefferson:" "It was asserted in the Federal newspapers generally, and *preached* from a multitude of pulpits, that one of the first acts of the President, after entering office, was to send a national vessel to invite and bring 'Tom Paine' to America."

"Paine was an infidel," continues Randall. "He had written politically against Washington. He was accused of inebriety,

and a want of chastity [of the truth of both which accusations Randall strongly indicates his unbelief.] But he was the author of "Common Sense" and the "Crisis."

On the occasion of Paine's writing to Jefferson that he was coming to visit him at Monticello, Randall again remarks:—"Mrs. Randolph, and we think Mrs. Epps, both daughters of the Church of England, were not careful to conceal that they would have much preferred to have Mr. Paine stay away. Mr. Jefferson turned to the speaker with his gentlest smile, and remarked in substance: "Mr. Paine is not, I believe, a favorite among the ladies—but he is too well entitled to the hospitality of every American not to cheerfully receive mine." Paine came, and remained a day or two, ... and left Mr. Jefferson's mansion, the subject of lighter prejudices, than when he entered it."

Mr. Paine was to have accompanied Mr. Munroe back to the United States, but was unable to complete his arrangements in time. This was fortunate; for the vessel in which the American minister embarked was, on her passage, boarded by a British frigate, and thoroughly searched for the author of "The Rights of Man." Paine then went to Havre; but finding that several British frigates were cruising about the port, he returned to Paris.

Seeing himself thus baulked, he wrote to Mr. Jefferson, as before stated, for assistance, which produced the letter above copied. He did not, however, from some cause or other, take passage in the Maryland. He next agreed to sail with Commodore Barney, but was accidentally detained beyond the time, and the vessel in which he was to have embarked was lost at sea.

In addition to these remarkable preservations, Paine, in 1805, was shot at through the window of his own house, at New Rochelle, and escaped unharmed; also the privateer in which, but for the interference of his father (as we have seen), he would, when a youth, have sailed, lost 174 out of her crew of 200 men, in a single battle; and when he was in prison, as has already been related, he missed going to the guillotine, in consequence of the jailor, whose business it was to put the death-mark on the cell-doors of the doomed, not noticing that the door of the cell which contained the author of the "Age of Reason" was open flat against the wall, so that the inside was marked for the information of Paine, instead of the outside for

the instruction of the executioner.* Had a missionary of superstition been thus preserved, how the hand of "God" would have been seen in the matter.

---

* "But in this set of Tumbrils [the dung-carts in which the victims of the Reign of Terror were dragged to execution] there are two other things notable; one notable person; and one want of a notable person. The notable person is Lieutenant-General Loiserolles, a nobleman by birth, and by nature; laying down his life here for his son. In the prison of Saint-Lazare, the night before last, hurrying to the gate to hear the death-list read, he caught the name of his son. The son was asleep at the moment. "I am Loiserolles," cried the old man; at Tinville's bar, an error in the Christian name is little; small objection was made.—The want of the notable person, again, is that of Deputy Paine! Paine has sat in the Luxembourg since January; and seemed forgotten; but Fouquier had pricked him at last. The turnkey, list in hand, is marking with chalk the outer doors of to-morrow's *Fournee*. Paine's outer door happened to be open, turned back on the wall; the turnkey marked it on the side next him, and hurried on; another turnkey came, and shut it; no chalk-mark now visible, the *Fournee* went without Paine. Paine's life lay not there."—*Carlyle.*

Fouquier Tinville, above alluded to, was the head juryman of the Revolutionary Tribunal. He was far more blood-thirsty than was Robespierre himself. Was not the proof of his atrocities indubitable, it would be impossible to believe that such horrors ever took place. Yet such a "man of *principle*," and so *incorruptible* was this horrible wretch, that, says Allison, "women, the pleasures of the table, or of the theatre, were alike indifferent to him.....He might during the period of his power, have amassed an immense fortune; he remained to the last poor, and his wife is said to have died of famine. His lodgidgs were destitute of every comfort; their whole furniture, after his death, did not sell for twenty pounds. No seduction could influence him." I will add, *so much for principle.* FOUQUIER TINVILLE WAS, PAST ALL QUESTION, VIRTUOUS, HONEST, SINCERE, CONSCIENTIOUS. Had this miserable victim of the cruelest and hardest to be got rid of delusion that mankind were ever infatuated with, been as destitute of all "virtuous" qualities as was Alexander VI., he could, at worst, have been bought off, and would probably not have perpetrated a tithe of the evil he did. He at last, like Robespierre, "sealed his testimony" on the scaffold.

The French, like ourselves, had been taught to venerate a religious system which defies that crowning atrocity, *crucifixion to satisfy justice!* and which consequently canonizes daily and hourly self-crucifixion. In all candor I ask, was not *pracitical faith* in the guillotine the natural result? and are not war, duelling, torturing, hanging, imprisioning; together with blaming and despising our unfortunate fellow-creatures as vicious,—as less holy than our stupid selves, the *practical logic* of "virtue" and "principle?" And were not Marat, Joseph Lebon, St. Just, Robespierre, Tinvale, and the rest of that ilk, the tools—the agents—the *faithful servants*, and finally the *victims* of the supernaturalistically educated and virtuously inclined *majority!* The arch tyrant who was at the bottom of *all* this, I shall take in hand presently, and show how to conquer; ay, annihilate him.

If the grand truth was taught us from our cradles, that we can no more expect well doing without the requisite *materialistic conditions*, than we can expect a watch to keep time except on condition that every wheel and spring shall be in artistic harmony with each other, where would be malice! And if we *practiced* in accordance with this grand truth, where would be either wholesale or retail murder? where would be wrong of *any* description?

"I don't know about that," methinks I hear the mildest of the old fogies

He at last sailed from Havre, on the 1st of September, 1802, and arrived in Baltimore on the 30th of October folllowing.

From Baltimore he went to Washington, where he was kindly received by the President, Thomas Jefferson. This gentleman thought so highly of him, that a few days before his arrival, he remarked to a friend,—"If there be an office in my gift, suitable for him to fill, I will give it to him; I will never abandon old friends to make room for new ones." Jefferson was one of the few among Paine's *illustrious* friends, who never joined the priest-ridden multitude against him. He corresponded with him up to the time of his death.

Mr. Paine was now between sixty and seventy years of age, yet vigorous in body, and with a mind not at all impaired.

Of the manner in which he was generally received on his return to the United States, we can form a very fair judgment from the following letter to his friend, Clio Rickman:—

My Dear Friend,—Mr. Monroe, who is appointed minister extraordinary to France, takes charge of this, to be delivered to Mr. Este, banker in Paris, to be forwarded to you.

I arrived at Baltimore 30th October, and you can have no idea of the agitation which my arrival occasioned. From New Hampshire to Georgia (an extent of 1500 miles), every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse.

My property in this country has been taken care of by my friends, and is now worth six thousand pounds sterling; which put in the funds will bring me £400 sterling a year.

Remember me in friendship and affection to your wife and family, and in the circle of our friends.

Yours in friendship,

Thomas Paine.

With respect to the course which Mr. Paine intended for the future to pursue, he says:—

---

exclaim. Well, my dear fellow biped, I'll tell you one thing you do most assuredly *feel to be true;* and you know it to be true, as sure as you are capable of the slightest connection of ideas. It is this. The present method of reforming the world, has, *since the most barbarous age,* never done aught but make it a great deal worse. Are people more honest or less gallant now than they ever were? And if civilized nations are not quite so cruel, especially in war time, as are savages, is not that clearly traceable to science and art? Show me where man is least cruel, and I will show you where "supernaturalism," the synonym for ignorance, and the very basis of "virtue," principle, and moralism, has lost the most ground, and where science and art have gained the most.

"I have no occasion to ask, nor do I intend to accept, any place or office in the government.

"There is none it could give me that would in any way be equal to the profits I could make as an author (for I have an established fame in the literary world), could I reconcile it to my principles to make money by my politics or my religion; I must be in everything as I have ever been, a disinterested volunteer; my proper sphere of action is on the common floor of citizenship, and to honest men I give my hand and my heart freely.

"I have some manuscript works to publish of which I shall give proper notice, and some mechanical affairs to bring forward, that will employ all my leisure time."

From Washington, Mr. Paine went to New York, and put up at the City Hotel, where the mayor and De Witt Clinton called on him; and, notwithstanding the influence of the emissaries of superstition and their dupes, he was honored with a public dinner by a most respectable and numerous party; and it is worthy of remark that Cheetham, then editor of a democratic daily paper, was particularly officious in helping to make the arrangements.

In respect to Cheetham's fictions about the slovenliness of Mr. Paine, if there had been any truth in his assertions, would not his most intimate friends, such as De Witt Clinton, the mayor of New York, and Mr. Jarvis, have noticed it? The truth about this is, that Mr. Paine, though always clean, was as *careless* in his dress as were Napoleon and Frederic the Great; and almost as lavish of his snuff. We have the positive and very respectable testimony of Mr. John Fellows, that Mr. Paine's slovenliness went no further than this.

But the sun of liberty had now so evidently passed meridian in America that most of the leading politicians of the day considered it for their interests to turn their backs on Mr. Paine; this threw the great martyr to the cause of freedom into the society of a class of people with better hearts, and except in respect of political gambling and fraud, with sounder heads.

Among this class was a respectable tradesman, a blacksmith and veterinary surgeon, of the name of Carver. When a boy he had known Paine, who also recollected him by some little services which Carver reminded him that he had performed for him at Lewes, in Sussex, England; such, for instance, as

saddling his horse for him. Mr. Carver was comfortably situated, and was honest and independent enough to openly avow the religious opinions of the author of the "Age of Reason." Paine boarded at his house some time before going to live at New Rochelle.

In a fit of anger, however, the unsuspicious Mr. Carver afterwards became the tool of Cheetham; "a circumstance which he (Carver) sorely regretted to the day of his death."

I once met him at a celebration of Paine's birth-day, and shall never forget the anxiety which the venerable old gentleman exhibited to do away with the wrong impression which the great libeller of Mr. Paine had betrayed him into making on the public mind. The circumstances were, in short, these: Carver had presented a bill for board to Mr. Paine, which the latter (who, as truly generous people usually are, was very economical) considered exhorbitant, and, therefore, hastily proposed paying off-hand, and having nothing more to do with Carver. Carver would probably not have presented any bill at all, had he not been, just then, in rather straitened circumstances, and at the same time aware that Mr. Paine was in affluence. He got into a passion at the manner in which Mr. Paine treated his claim, wrote him some angry letters, and unfortunately kept copies of them; which Cheetham, without letting him know what use he intended to make of them, managed to get hold of and publish after Mr. Paine's death, though the difficulty which elicited them had been immediately and amicably adjusted between the parties concerned.

This piece of chicanery, however, cost Cheetham a conviction for libel on Madame Bonneville, who had been, though only by inuendo, mentioned in the letters aforesaid, in a manner which society, in its present state of wisdom, pleases to consider scandalous.

When Mr. Paine went to New Rochelle, he boarded with Mr. Purdy, who lived on his farm. He offered Madame Bonneville and her two sons his small farm at Bordentown. But that rural retreat was so different from Paris, that she chose to remain in New York, where she taught French occasionally, but was almost wholly supported by Mr. Paine.

Madame Bonneville, though generally amiable, sometimes contracted debts which Mr. Paine conceived unnecessary. She furthermore, says Mr. Vale, "did not scruple to send bills in to him which he had not sanctioned." To check which propensity,

Mr. Paine once allowed himself to be sued by a Mr. Wilburn for a debt of thirty-five dollars for her board; but after non-suiting the plaintiff, he paid the debt. As a proof that there was never any serious quarrel between Mr. Paine and Madame Bonneville, that lady, her husband and family were, as we shall presently see, Mr. Paine's principal legatees.

To oblige his friends, Mr. Paine after a while left his farm at New Rochelle and went back to Carver's to board; where he remained till he took up his residence at the house of Mr. Jarvis, the celebrated painter, who relates the following anecdote of his guest:

"One afternoon a very old lady, dressed in a large scarlet cloak, knocked at the door and inquired for Thomas Paine. Mr. Jarvis told her he was asleep. 'I am very sorry,' she said, 'for that, for I want to see him very particularly.' Thinking it a pity to make an old woman call twice, Mr. Jarvis took her into Paine's bed-room and waked him. He rose upon one elbow, and then, with an expression of eye that staggered the old woman back a step or two, he asked—'What do you want?'—'Is your name Paine?'—'Yes.' 'Well then, I come from Almighty God to tell you, that if you do not repent of your sins and believe in our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, you will be damned, and'————'Poh, poh, it is not true. You were not sent with such an impertinent message. Jarvis, make her go away. Pshaw, he would not send such a foolish old woman as you about with his messages. Go away. Go back. Shut the door. The old lady raised both her hands, kept them so, and without saying another word, walked away in mute astonishment."

In 1807, Mr. Paine, now in the seventieth year of his age, removed to the house of Mr. Hitt, a baker, in Broome-street. Whilst here he published "An Examination of the Passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called Prophecies of the Coming of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Paine lived in Partition-street successively; and afterwards in Greenwich-street; but becoming too feeble to be thus moving about among boarding-houses, Madame Bonneville, in May, 1809, hired for his accommodation a small house in Columbia-street, where she attended on him till his death.

Mr. Paine had moved from house to house, as we have seen, not because he had not ample resources, but, partly to oblige his friends, and partly for the variety it afforded, partly because it

suited his plain and simple habits, and partly because, like most old people, he had become a little too frugal.

Perceiving his end approaching, Mr. Paine applied to Willit Hicks, an influential preacher of the Society of Friends, for permission to be buried in their cemetery. Mr. Hicks laid the proposition before the members of his meeting, who, to their eternal disgrace, returned a negative answer.

Of course the author of "Age of Reason," was now beset by the emissaries of superstition. The clergy themselves not being aware of the momentous, eternal, and impregnable *materialistic truth* which the folly they teach encrusts, were panic-struck at finding the battery of reason, which had proved so powerful, under Paine's management, against kings, aimed at them, and by the same skilful engineer. They therefore spared no pains which malice and the mean cowardice which a "consciousness of guilt" inspires, could invent, to get up some show of materials, out of which to manufacture a recantation, But not the least particle of any proof of what they sought did they obtain; all the pious tales with which they have insulted the world on the subject, are sheer fabrications. Yet the Christian judge who sentenced Cheetham for libel on account of one of these wretched impositions, did not blush, says Mr. Vale, to "compliment" that arch impostor for having by the very act for which he was legally compelled to condemn him to pay "heavy damages," produced a work useful to religion!*

Not long before his death, Mr. Paine, in the course of conversation with his friend Jarvis, at whose house he then was, observed: "Now I am in health, and in perfect soundness of mind; now is the time to express my opinion." He then solemnly declared that his views, as set forth in his theological writings, remained the same.

The late Dr. Manly, on the occasion of my calling his attention to an article in an English Encyclopedia, which conveyed the idea that he testified to Paine's recantation, assured me that the author of "The Age of Reason" "did not recant;" and the Doctor seemed not over pleased that his words had been

* From a large pamphlet, entitled "Grant Thorburn and Thomas Paine," recently put forth gratis by Mr. Oliver White, I learn that a religious publisher in New York has, within a few years past, had to pay damages for a malicious article aimed at the character of Paine, but which incidentally hit somebody else; which article, it is but justice to the publisher's memory (for he is now dead) to say, he was betrayed into publishing, probably without any ill intention on his part.

tortured into giving the impression they did. He believed that Mr. Paine's last words were,—"I don't wish to hear anything more about that man," in answer to the question, "Do you wish to believe in Jesus Christ?" I think I remember Dr. Manly's words correctly, though Mr. Vale says that the answer of Paine, as reported by Dr. Manly, was,—"I have no wish to believe on the subject." It will be perceived, however, that there is no material difference; and that Dr. Manly might, on two several occasions, and at wide intervals, have stated the answer in both ways; either of which conveys essentially the same meaning.

On one occasion, a Methodist preacher obtruded himself on Mr. Paine, and abruptly told him that "unless he repented of his unbelief, he would be damned." To which the almost dying man, partly rising in his bed, indignantly answered, that if he was able, he would immediately put him out of the room. This scene is related by Mr. Willit Hicks, of whom mention has already been made.

The clergy condescended, in their desperation to blacken the character, and destroy the influence of him who they feared would otherwise put an end to the craft by which they had their wealth, to make use of means which, in pity to poor human nature, would I gladly consign to oblivion, and shall, therefore, mention only some prominent cases. I have named Cheetham, as he was a public character—an editor. But I shall in mercy let the names of the private individuals who were the tools which the priesthood made use of in this connection, sink beneath contempt; in fact, I feel not altogether guiltless of sacrilege, in placing the name of any one of Thomas Paine's slanderers in the same volume which contains his.

It has herein been indubitably proven that the first part of "The Age of Reason," *the first of Paine's "infidel" productions*, be it remembered, was written in 1793; and that the second part was written some time thereafter. Franklin died in 1790. Yet the "American Tract Society" has not scrupled to assert, in a tract entitled "Don't Unchain the Tiger," that "When an infidel production was submitted—probably by Paine—to Benjamin Franklin, in manuscript, he returned it to the author, with a letter, from which the following is extracted: "*I would advise you not to attempt* UNCHAINING THE TIGER, *but to turn this piece before it is seen by any other person.*" "*If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be* WITHOUT *it?*"

"*Think*," said he to Paine, in a letter, to which allusion has been made, "*how many inconsiderate and inexperienced youth of both sexes there are, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual.*"

It will be perceived that the above pretended extract is given as though it was *verbatim;* though from a letter which, in a very circuitous manner, and one most ingeniously calculated to deceive is, after all, confessed to be only "*probably*" written. The concluding portion of the extract is given only after considerable pious dust has been most artistically thrown in the eyes of the more prayerful than careful reader. Here, the author of "Don't Unchain the Tiger," resolves no longer to let "I dare not, wait upon I would," but *fully* declares, though in a manner that would do credit to the most trickish Jesuit, that ever *mentally reserved the truth*, that the "letter *to which mention has been made*," was written *by* FRANKLIN *to* Paine, evidently, as all can see, who have mastered the second rule of arithmetic, *three years after the death of the writer.*" Yet Protestants laugh at Catholics for swallowing transubstantiation.

How firmly did they who put forth "Don't Unchain the Tiger," believe in revelation? How much faith had they, in the truth of a book wherein it is printed, that "God" had declared—"Liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone?"

Mark this "*probably*" well. There is in it such an exquisiteness of all that is mean, cowardly, mendacious, and contemptible.

If the writer of "Don't Unchain the Tiger" ever saw *any* letter from which he extracted what he pretends he has, did not that letter inform him, past all "probably," *and before he made the first part of the extract,* BY whom, and TO whom, it was written?

Oh, ye priests! How low are you fallen! What lower depths *can* human degradation touch? How much smaller *can* you, your own contemptible selves, suppose the intellectual calibre of your poor dupes to be? What satisfaction can you feel in the reverence of those whose understandings you thus estimate?

Compare the *present position*, in the social organism, of your *sincere disciples*, with that which they occupied when what you teach was the highest which man was prepared to receive.

But unless my memory serves me very badly, this "Tiger"

tract was originally published *without* the "probably;" and unequivocally named the "Age of Reason." I recollect well, that about twenty-five years ago, a committee, one of whom was the famous infidel lecturer, the late Mr. Benjamin Offen, called at the Tract Society's agency, and pointed out how impossible it was that this "Tiger" publication which hailed from thence, could be true; and I am strongly impressed that this miserable "*probably*" has been the result.

Clergymen, it is neither in malice nor anger, but with feelings of unfeigned sorrow and pity, that I use such language to and respecting you. I have not a wish that would not be gratified, were you at this moment at the head of mankind, *teaching the knowable;* and until you are *worthily* reinstated in your *rightful* —your *natural* position in the social organism, violence, fraud, humbug—in fine, *demagogism*, will there revel, and you will be its degraded purveyor. How do you relish the impudence with which demagogism now snubs you back to the "supernatural," whenever you dare utter a *practical* word?

I could fill twenty pages or more with extracts, many of them documentary, from previous histories of Paine, going to prove that the author of "The Age of Reason" never recanted. But can it be possible that those who possess a spark of reason, even, can consider the matter of the slightest consequence? The question of the truth or falsehood of a proposition is a matter for the judgment to decide. Is the judgment of a dying man more clear than that of a perfectly healthy one! Was there ever an instance known, of a human biped being so big a fool, as to go to a dying man for advice in preference to going to him for it when he was in health, where *any known* value was concerned? The thing is too absurd to waste another word upon; and I have noticed it at all, only to shew to what meanness modern priests will stoop; to what miserable shifts the corrupt hangers on to the superannuated and effete, are at length reduced. At this day the wretched fortune-teller who deals out supernaturalism by the fifty cents worth, may justly feel proud by the side of the archbishop—by the side of the successors of those who, before the dawn of science, taught the highest of which man was capable of receiving, thus starting civilization into existence, and justly becoming mightier than kings. But the time is fast approaching when they will teach the knowable and efficient, and resume their natural position, that of the head of the social organism. Till when, confusion will keep high holi-

day, folly be rampant, ignorance supreme, and superstition and demagogism will be rife. The case is as clear as this:—Man come into the world ignorant, and of course needs teaching. Yet what has been palmed off on man for elective government, *confessedly but represents him.* The clergy *professedly teach him;* and of course, when they teach him right, as they will soon find out that it is immeasurably more for their own advantage to do, than it is to teach him wrong, all will be well. The human race will, from that point in teaching, rapidly develop into a harmoniously regulated organism ; a grand being, or God, to whom all the conceivable and desirable will be possible. Each individual will act as freely as do the wheels and springs of a perfect, because *scientifically* and *artistically*, and *harmoniously* regulated time-keeper.

At whatever stage of development caucus-and-ballot-boxism takes charge of man, it assumes that he is, in the main, wise enough already, that the majority is the fountain-head of both wisdom and power; that rulers are legitimately but the *servants* of the *ruled.* What balderdash.

The only government, except that of despotism or humbug, that man ever has had, now has, or ever can have, was, is and must be, *under simple nature*, that of science and art—that of teaching.

"Let me make the people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws," said Napoleon. "Let me make the people's cradle-hymns, and Sunday-schools catechisms," say I, "and I will defy all the power which can be brought against me to supplant me in their government, *except by adopting my method.*"

And when the people's cradle-hymns and Sunday school catechisms are composed by those who qualify themselves to lead, direct, or govern mankind by science and art, and who derive human law from the whole body of the knowable, instead of from the wild regions of the speculative, and from the arbitrary subjective, the world will be delivered from religious, political, social, and moral quackery ; *but not till then.* And to whomsoever says "*lo here,*" "*lo there,*" or lo anywhere except to the science of sciences and art of arts of *how* to be free, I say, and appeal for my justification, to the entire past,—*you are deceived or a deceiver.*

If the world was not deluded with the idea that reason and free discussion are the only means that are available against priestcraft and statecraft, it would long since have discovered

and applied the true remedy, viz.: to seize the citadel of the infant mind—of education; and thus institute a religion and government of science and art, in place of a religion of mystery and a government of despotism and humbug. False religion and its correlate—bad government, must be *prevented.* Whatever religious or governmental notions are *bred into* man, can never to any efficient extent, be got out of him.

Priestcraft and statecraft, in England and the United States, would like nothing better than *an assurance*, that mankind's reformers would henceforth confine their efforts to reason and free discussion, and to the furtherance of education on its present plan in *all our schools and colleges.* Priestcraft and statecraft would then forever be as safe as would a well regulated army among undisciplined savages, who did nothing but find fault with their oppressors; and to the various cliques of which savages, the regulars would *suggest* as many various plans for *their own* (the regular's) overthrow, for them (the savages), to *discuss over* and *divide upon.*

In one of the most purely monarchical countries in all Europe (Germany) common school and collegiate education prominently form one of the government's *pet projects.*

In England, where the wheels of the state machinery mutually neutralize each other's action, neither monarchs nor ecclesiastics can do aught but keep themselves miserably rich, and the great body of the people wretchedly poor.

Free discussion and reason have done what little good in church and state affairs it was their function to do, *except as will be hereinafter mentioned;* and they are *now* in both England and the United States, but the safety-valve which prevents the boiler of the ecclesiastical steam-engine from bursting; and secures political despotism, swindling, and corruption, from having to do anything but *change hands.*

Reason and free discussion are *now* the fifth wheel of the car of progress, whose useless noise and comparatively *singular appearance* diverts attention from the slow; nay, backward movement, of the other four wheels, and thus prevents any change for the better being made.

If, on the continent of Europe, monarchs and the Pope forbid political and religious free discussion, it is not because they are afraid that the first will lead to liberty, or the second to practical wisdom. They are perfectly aware that *free talking* but disturbs political and religious affairs; and would only displace

themselves who are well seated in, and have grown fat on, religious and political abuse, to make way for an ungorged shoal of political and ecclesiastical leeches.

Passing lightly over the pitiable trash which in the United States more than in any other country is palmed off on the multitude for knowledge, look at our higher literature. See how it truckles to the low, and narrow, and unscientific views which *confessedly* had their rise when man was a mere savage. Where, throughout the United States, is the magazine which has the liberal and independent tone of the Westminster Review, which hails from the capital of monarchy-governed and *confessedly* church-taxed England? The most independent magazine of which the United States can boast, is the "Atlantic Monthly;" but I have strong misgivings as to whether they whose *monied* interests are staked in it will thank me, or would thank any one, for such praise.

But the orthodox clergy are already, owing almost wholly to what mere fractional science and art have done, the laughing-stock of nearly the entire scientific world, and the head-clergy are writhing under the tortures of self-contempt, in such agony, that the main drift of their preaching is to try, without arousing their dupes, to let the knowing ones (whom curiosity, interest, or a desperate attempt to dispel Sabbatical ennui may have brought into their congregations) see that they are not the fools which they, for bread and butter's sake, pretend to be.

The following extract from a letter of Baron Humboldt to his friend Varnhagen Von Ense, is a fair sample of the contempt in which the apostles of mystery are held by men of science:

BERLIN, *March 21, 1842.*

My dear friend, so happily restored to me! It is a source of infinite joy to me to learn, from your exquisite letter, that the really very delightful society of the Princess's has benefited you physically, and therefore, as I should say, in my criminal materialism, mentally also. Such a society, blown together chiefly from the same fashionable world of Berlin (somewhat flat and stale), immediately takes a new shape in the house of Princess Pueckler. It is like the spirit which should breathe life into the state; the material seems ennobled.

I still retain your "Christliche Glaubenslehre," [a celebrated work on the Christian Dogma, by Dr. David Friedrich Strauss] I who long ago in Potsdam, was so delighted with Strauss's

Life of the Saviour.* One learns from it not only what he does not believe, which is less new to me, but rather what kind of things have been believed and taught by those black coats (parsons) who know how to enslave mankind anew, yea, who are putting on the armour of their former adversaries.

But a still more encouraging aspect of the case is, that a knowledge of the great truth is rapidly spreading, that all in the human connection is a vast *material organism*, the possible modifications of which are indicated by the organ of its highest consciousness,—man; and that the whole family of man is a grand social organism (however, as yet, unjointed), the well-being of every part of which, is *indespensable* to that of every other part. But more of this, shortly.

Mr. Paine suffered greatly during his lsst illness (his disease being dropsy, attended with cough and constant vomiting), yet his mental faculties remained unimpaired to the last. On the 8th of June, 1809, about nine o'clock in the forenoon, he expired, almost without a struggle.

I have, as the reader has seen, noticed some of the little foibles and eccentricities of Mr. Paine; not, however, that they were of any account, but simply because they attest that he was not superhumanly perfect; that he was not that ridiculous cross between man and "God," which the biographers of Washington have placed him in the position of appearing to be.

Lovers are sure to have their petty quarrels, else they would be indifferent to each other; and when prejudice shall be done away with, mankind will love Thomas Paine none the less for the human frailties which were just sufficient to show that he belonged to human nature.

To-day after Mr. Paine's death, his remains were taken to New Rochelle, attended by a few friends, and there buried on his farm; and a plain stone was erected, with the following inscription:—

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF "COMMON SENSE."

Died June 8, 1809, aged seventy-two years and five months.

* Humboldt's "Letters to Varnhagen Von Ense," have just been published by Messrs. Rudd & Carleton: and Strauss' "Life of the Saviour," or, to give the work its full title, "The Life of Jesus Critically Examined," is

Mr. William Corbett afterward removed the bones of Mr. Paine to England.

In 1839, through the exertions of a few friends of the liberal cause, among whom Mr. G. Vale was very active, a neat monument was erected over the grave of Mr. Paine. Mr. Frazee, an eminent artist, generously volunteered to do the sculpture. This monument cost about thirteen hundred dollars. On it is carved a representation of the head of Mr. Paine, underneath which is this inscription:—

THOMAS PAINE,

AUTHOR OF

"COMMON SENSE."

Reader, did it ever occur to you, that all the crimes which an individual can commit, are *in reality* summed up in the word *misfortune?* Such is the fact. Society, therefore, not altogether without reason, however regardless of justice, considers nothing more *disgraceful* than misfortune; and hence it is, that of all the slanders got up to injure the reputation of Mr. Paine, and thus prevent his influence, none have been more industriously circulated, and none have proved more successful, than those which represented him as being in extreme poverty. Without further remark, therefore, I shall call your attention to

THE WILL OF THOMAS PAINE.

The People of the State of New York, by the Grace of God, Free and Independent, to all to whom these presents shall come or may concern. *Send Greeting:*

Know ye that the annexed is a true copy of the will of Thomas Paine, deceased, as recorded in the office of our surrogate, in and for the city and county of New York. In testimony whereof, we have caused the seal of office of our said surrogate to be hereunto affixed. Witness, Silvanus Miller, Esq., surrogate of said county, at the city of New York, the twelfth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nine, and of our independence the thirty-fourth.

SILVANUS MILLER.

---

published by Calvin Blanchard. The translation is by Marian Evans, the accomplished authoress of "Adam Bede," and is pronounced by Strauss himself to be most elegantly done and perfectly correct.

The last will and testament of me, the subscriber, Thomas Paine, reposing confidence in my Creator God, and in no other being, for I know of no other, nor believe in any other, I, Thomas Paine, of the State of New York, author of the work entitled "Common Sense," written in Philadelphia, in 1 75, and published in that city the beginning of January, 1776, which awaked America to a Declaration of Independence, on the fourth of July following, which was as fast as the work could spread through such an extensive country; author also of the several numbers of the "American Crisis," thirteen in all, published occasionally during the progress of the revolutionary war—the last is on the peace; author also of the "Rights of Man," parts the first and second, written and published in London, in 1791 and 1792; author also of a work on religion, "Age of Reason," parts the first and second. N.B. I have a third part by me in manuscript, and an answer to the Bishop of Landaff; author also of a work, lately published, entitled "Examination of the passages in the New Testament quoted from the Old, and called prophesies concerning Jesus Christ," and showing that there are no prophecies of any such person; author also of several other works not here enumerated—"Dissertations on the first Principles of Government,"—"Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance,"—"Agrarian Justice," etc., etc., make this my last will and testament, that is to say: I give and bequeath to my executors hereinafter appointed, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, thirty shares I hold in the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, which cost me 1470 dollars, they are worth now upward of 1500 dollars, and all my moveable effects, and also the money that may be in my trunk or elsewere at the time of my decease, paying thereout the expenses of my funeral, in trust as to the said shares, moveables, and money, for Margaret Brazier Bonneville, wife of Nichols Bonneville, of Paris, for her own sole and seperate use, and at her own disposal, notwithstanding her coverture. As to my farm in New Rochelle, I give, devise, and bequeath the same to my said executors, Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, and to the survivor of them, his heirs and assigns for ever, in trust, nevertheless, to sell and dispose of the north side thereof, now in the occupation of Andrew A. Dean, beginning at the west end of the orchard and running in a line with the land sold to — Coles, to the end of the farm, and to apply the money arising from such sale as hereinafter directed. I give to my friends, Walter Morton, of

the New York Phœnix Insurance Company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, counsellor-at-law, late of Ireland, two hundred dollars each, and one hundred dollars to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer, late of New York, to be paid out of the money arising from said sale, and I give the remainder of the money arising from that sale, one half thereof to Clio Rickman, of High or Upper Mary-la-bone street, London, and the other half to Nicholas Bonneville of Paris, husband of Margaret B. Bonneville aforesaid: and as to the south part of the said farm, containing upward of one hundred acres, in trust, to rent out the same or otherwise put it to profit, as shall be found most advisadle, and to pay the rents and profits thereof to the said Margaret B. Bonneville, in trust for her childern. Benjamin Bonneville and Thomas Bonneville, their education and maintenance, until they come to the age of twenty-one years, in order that she may bring them well up, give them good and useful learning, and instruct them in their duty to God, and the practice of morality, the rent of the land or the interest of the money for which it may be sold, as hereinafter mentioned, to be employed in their education. And after the youngest of the said children shall have arrived at the age of twenty-one years, in further trust to convey the same to the said children share and share alike in fee simple. But if it shall be thought advisable by my executors and executrix, or the survivor or survivors of them, at any time before the youngest of the said children shall come of age, to sell and dispose of the said south side of the said farm, in that case I hereby authorize and empower my said executors to sell and dispose of the same, and I direct that the money arising from such sale be put into stock, either in the United States bank stock or New York Phœnix Insurance company stock, the interest or dividends thereof to be applied as is already directed, for the education and maintenance of the said children: and the principal to be transferred to the said children or the survivor of them on his or their coming of age. I know not if the society of people called Quakers admit a person to be buried in their burying-ground, who does not belong to their society, but if they do, or will admit me, I would prefer being buried there, my father belonged to that profession, and I was partly brought up in it. But if it is not consistent with their rules to do this, I desire to be buried on my farm at New Rochelle. The place were I am to be buried to be a square of twelve feet, to be enclosed with rows of trees, and a stone or

post and railed fence, with a head-stone with my name and age engraved upon it, author of "Common Sense." I nominate, constitute, and appoint Walter Morton, of the New York Phœnix Insurance company, and Thomas Addis Emmet, counsellor-at-law, late of Ireland, and Margaret B. Bonneville my executors and executrix to this my last will and testament, requesting them the said Walter Morton and Thomas Addis Emmet, that they will give what assistance they conveniently can to Mrs. Bonneville, and see that the children be well brought up. Thus placing confidence in their friendship, I herewith take my final leave of them and of the world. I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good; and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator God. Dated this eighteenth day of January, in the year one thousand eight hundred and nine, and I have also signed my name to the other sheet of this will in testimony of its being a part thereof.

THOMAS PAINE. (L.S.)

Signed, sealed, and published and declared by the testator, in our presence, who, at his request, and in the presence of each other, have set our names as witnesses thereto, the words "published and declared" first interlined.

WILLIAM KEESE,
JAMES ANGEVIEN,
CORNELIUS RYDER.

CONCLUDING APPLICATION.

I HAVE now, so far as I can discover, recorded all the facts in relation to Thomas Paine, with which the public have any concern. I have even repeated some things (under protest, be it remembered) with which the public have no business whatever.

But the most important part of the task which, on reference to my title-page, it will be perceived that I undertook, remains to be completed.

Everyone will unquestionably draw their own conclusion from facts or what they consider such. But I assure all whom it may concern, that I should not consider myself justified in troubling them with my views on matters of the vast importance of religion or highest law, and government or social science, had I not devoted to these subjects long years of assiduous preparation; had I not, rightly or wrongly, *systemized facts;* even now, I do so with a full consciousness of my need of vastly more light.

Facts, separately considered, are but the unconnected links of a chain; truth is the chain itself. Facts, in themselves, are worth nothing; it is only the truths that are deducible from them through their systemization that is of use. Brick, and mortar, and beams, are facts; entirely useless, however, until systemized into an edifice. Every man's life is a fact, but the lives of such men as Rousseau, Paine, Comte, Luther, and Fourier, are sublime truths which are to help to give to the lives of the individuals of our race, all that can be conceived of even "*eternal*" value.

Strictly speaking, all authors are, like Paine, and Rousseau, and Comte, heroes. But those writers who merely revamp, or polish up old, worn out ideas, and then sell them back again to those from whom they stole, or borrowed, or begged them, are no more authors than they are manufactures who steal, borrow, beg, or buy for next to nothing, old hats, iron them over, and sell them back for new to their former owners, who in their

delight to find how truly they fit their heads, do not suspect the cheat. It's a somewhat difficult thing to make new hats fit heads. It's a Herculean task to make new ideas fit them. It's *next to* impossible to make new *habits* fit mankind.

The American Revolution, of which Paine was the "author hero," and the French Revolution, of which Rousseau was the great mover, were, as I trust we have already seen, but closely connected incidents in the grand Revolution which began with man's instinctive antagonism to all which stands in the way of the *perfect* liberty which nature has, by one and the same act, given him both the desire for, and the assurance of.

All which exists or has taken place, is connected with all which ever has existed, or will exist or take place; and unless the historian shows that connection, so far as it has a *perceptible practical bearing* history becomes but a mere collection of curious, and otherwise barren details.

I have before directed the attention of the reader to the fact, that whoever penned the Declaration of our National Independance, must have well studied Rousseau's "Contrat Social."

The Rev. Dr. Smith, in his "Divine Drama of History and Civilization," speaks thus of the relation of Rousseau to his time:—

"Rousseau was the avenging spirit of the Evangelical Protastants whom monarchical France had massacred or banished. He had the blood and the soul of the Presbyterian in him; but he was drunk with vengeance, and he had, according to his own confession, imbibed with his mother's milk the hatred of kings, and nourished that hate and kept it warm. He declared that though man was born free he was everywhere in chains. Being gifted with great eloquence, he delighted his readers. He realized the government of the people and became the soul of the Revolution."

"Twelve hundred human individuals," says Thomas Carlyle, "with the Gospel of Jean Jacques Rousseau in their pocket, congregating in the name of twenty-five millions, with full assurance of faith, to 'make the Constitution:' such sight, the acme and main product of the eighteenth century, our World can witness only once. For time is rich in wonders, in monstrosities most rich; and is observed never to repeat himself or any of his Gospels:—surely least of all this Gospel according to Jean Jacques. Once it was right and indispensable, since such had become the belief of man; but once also is enough."

"They have made the Constitution, these Twelve Hundred Jean-Jacques Evangelists."

"A new Fifth Evangelist, Jean-Jacques, calling on men to amend *each the whole world's* wicked existence, and be saved by making the Constitution."

Thomas Carlyle in innumerable other cases speaks most lovingly of "Poor Jean Jacques." In an elaborate critical estimate of Rousseau and the men of the eighteenth century, he says: "Hovering in the distance with use—struck minatory air-stern-beckoning, comes Rousseau. Poor Jean-Jaques! Alternately deified and cast to the dogs: a deep-minded, high-minded, even noble, yet woefully misarranged mortal, with all the misformations of nature intensified to the verge of madness by unfavorable Fortune. A lonely man; his life a long soliloquy? The wandering Tiresias of his time;—in whom, however, did lie prophetic meaning, such as none of the others offer. His true character, with its lofty aspirings and poor performings; and how the spirit of the man worked so wildly like celestial fire in a thick, dark element of chaos, and shot forth etherial radiance, all piercing lightning, yet could not illuminate, was quenched and did not conquer; this, with what lies in it, may now be pretty accurately appreciated," etc.

The world-famous "Confessions" of Rousseau have also powerfully stimulated revolt against the most despotic of tyrannies that ever enchained the human race. No romance was ever half so interesting. With resistless power their author compels us to himself. Every page chains the reader with electric fascination. With absorbing interest we follow him in every step of his strange sad life. Not a scene in the "Confessions" but what has formed the subject for a master piece by some great artist. Rousseau was one of those men whose fame the world has taken into its own hands. One of those big-hearted, truth-loving, high-aspiring, yet sad-fated, stumbling men, whose sufferings have been made up for by an eternal meed of tenderness and love. He has been taken into the heart of mankind.

Perhaps nothing could more markedly manifest the place Jean Jacques holds in the heart of the world than the love and reverence which have been lavished on him by all the high-souled poets and writers in every land since his day. Goethe, Schiller, Jean Paul, Shelley, Brougham, Byron, Carlyle, Tennyson, etc., etc. All that is fresh and lofty and spiritual in the

new French school of Poetry and Literature, is distinctly traceable to Rousseau. Bernadin de Saint Pierre, Mad. de Stael, Chateaubriand, Lamartine, etc., etc., were successively formed under his influence, and adoringly worshipped him as their master. Thomas Carlyle, in a conversation with Emerson (see English Traits, p. 22), while speaking of the men who had influenced the formation of his character, declared that *Rousseau's "Confessions" had discovered to him that he* (Carlyle) *was not a dunce.*

R. W. Emerson, too, speaks of "The Confessions" as *a book so important in literature, that it was well worth while to translate. . . its courage and precision of thought will keep it good.*"

And the high-souled *Schiller* hymns Rousseau thus:

"Hail grave of Rousseau! here thy troubles cease!
Thy life one search for freedom and for peace:
Thee peace and freedom life did ne'er allow:
Thy search is ended, and thou find'st them now!
When will the old wound scar! In the dark age
Perish'd the wise. Light comes—how fared the sage?
The same in darkness or in light his fate,
Time brings no mercy to the bigot's hate!
Socrates charmed philosophy to dwell
On earth; by false philosophers he fell:
In Rousseau Christians marked their victim—when
Rousseau endeavored to make Christians men!"

Reader, please to skip the next six paragraphs, unless you can pardon a digression (and I must confess to have given you some exercise in that respect already), and unless you furthermore love liberty, justice, and *equal rights*, not as things to be merely talked about, sung about, and "fought, bled and died" about, but as *practical realities.*

In a state of bliss in perfect contrast with what generally passes for married life, Rousseau spent several years with Madam De Warens; a lady of noble birth, who was in comfortable circumstances, enjoying a pension from Victor Amadeus, king of Sardinia. She was the wife of a man with whom she could not live happily, and from whom she therefore separated. Rousseau, in his "Confessions," thus describes her: "All who loved her, loved each other. Jealousy and rivalry themselves yielded to the dominant sentiment she inspired; and I never saw any of those who surrounded her, entertain the slightest ill-will towards each other." "I hazard the assertion, that if Socrates could esteem Aspasia, he would have respected Madam de Warens." "Let my reader," continues the enamored philoso-

pher, "pause a moment at this eulogy; and if he has in his mind's eye any other woman of whom he can say this much, let him, as he values his life's repose, cleave to her, were she, for the rest, the lowest of drabs."

After eight years of bliss with Madam de Warens, that lady's taste, though not her affections, changed. Rousseau, also wishing to visit Paris, they parted in perfect friendship. At Paris, Rossean resumed the free-love connection with Thérése Le Vasseur, a young girl of small accomplishments, but of a most amiable disposition. Some of the highest nobles in France (including the king and queen) did not disdain to treat her with marked respect; and after Rousseau's death, the government of France pensioned Thérése, instead of letting her die of hunger, as the government of England, to its eternal disgrace, suffered Lady Hamilton, the mistress of Lord Nelson, to do, although to that accomplished Lady and to her influence and shrewd management at the court of Naples, England owes the victory of Trafalgar. One morning, whilst the king and his ministers lay snoring, she managed to obtain from her intimate friend the queen, a permit for her gallant free-lover, Nelson, to water his fleet at Naples; but for which, he could not have pursued and conquered the French at Trafalgar. His last request of the country for whose cause he was dying, was,—"Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton."

Yet England was too "virtuous" to prevent Lady Hamilton from depending on the charity of a poor *French* washer-woman; and from having, at last, to starve to death, in a garret, in the capital of the nation whose navy had been almost destroyed through her management and her lover's bravery. "Virtue" and "piety" readily *accept* the services of those they impudently style "vicious" and "profane," but generally consider it very scandalous to reward them.

Some of the most "virtuous" citizens in every country in Christendom do not hesitate to eat the bread and wear the clothes purchased with the rent of those curses inseparable from present social institutions,—prostitution dens; and churches and missionaries, draw large revenues from these "*necessary evils*" as they are cantingly called. *Necessary evils?* If there is a "sin" which a *just* "God" could punish, it is that of admitting that there exists "*necessary* evils;" for this "sin" is a most efficient prolonger of the damnation of the human race.

But England *did* build monuments to Nelson, and *he* has had all the honor of the victory of Trafalgar. Why did not Lady Hamilton come in for a share of that honor? In addition to what we have seen she did to procure that victory, can any gallant man doubt, that her charms were the main stimulus of Nelson's courage? What dangers would not a man that was a man brave, in order to swell with delight, admiration, and *just approval*, the heart of her whom he adored, and who *freely-loved him?*

Reader, did you ever ask yourself why it is that gallant men (and almost all notable men are gallant) are applauded in high society, and are *comparatively* little blamed or frowned upon among the million? Surely, gallantry in woman is *really* no more "vicious" than it is in man; it is simply because, owing to *ignorance* with respect to the *regulation* of love affairs, it is more inconvenient that it is more discountenanced. It is because women have to be, under present institutions, considered as *chattels;* as *articles of luxury;* which no man wants to be at the expense of, except for his own pleasure, *of course.* But for ignorance of how to *fully* gratify every natural desire, there would be no such words as either *virtue* or *vice* in the dictionary; and however amiable it is for people to forbear to gratify themselves *in any respect*, at the expense of others, still, we should constantly bear in mind that all the honor that has ever been bestowed on "virtue" and self-denial, is *primarily* due to *ignorance and poverty;* to ignorance of how to create the means whereby to dispense with "virtue," self-denial, ay, and even that most virtuous of all the virtues,—*charity;* to ignorance of how to develop, modify, and *combine* the substantial, till desire is but the measure of fulfillment—till *to will* is but the precursor of *to have.*

Human progress is generally divisable into three ages:—the age of mystery, the age of reason, and the age of *practical science and art.* These answer to the theological, the critical and the positive stages of the Grand Revolution just alluded to; of which revolution, the "author hero" was AUGUSTE COMTE.

Rousseau and Paine had their forerunner in Martin Luther; Comte's John Baptist was Charles Fourier.

To Martin Luther and Charles Fourier, mankind are almost as much indebted, as to those for whom these prepared the way.

Fourier was far more in advance of his time than was Luther; still, Luther's step was much the most perilous to himself.

Whoever can look on the picture [I saw it in the Dusseldorf Gallery] of Luther at the Diet of Worms, with dry eyes, without feeling an admiration near akin to adoration for *The Man* who would go where the cause of liberty called him, "though there should be there as many devils as tiles on the roofs," must be made of sterner stuff than I am.

Look on that incarnation of bravery. See how undaunted that single representative of the cause of the human race stands, amidst the terrible array of princes and bishops. There were six hundred of them; headed by the Emperor himself.

As fearlessly as Paine first openly pronounced those treasonable words—"American Independence," Luther has dared to burn the Pope's bull, even when there was not a crowned head in all Christendom but trembled at that awful document. Surely the heart that warms for Paine must glow for Luther. Materialist, though I am, I do reverence that brave monk. Had the Elector of Saxony been the most absolute monarch that ever reigned; and had the Landgrave of Hesse taken as many wives* and concubines as the wisest man, in Jehovah's estimation, that ever was or ever will be, is said to have had, these princes would nevertheless deserve the eternal gratitude of mankind, for the protection they afforded to the great apostle of reform, but for the *division*, in the ranks of despotism, which he created, a Rousseau and a Paine could not *so soon* have *preached liberty*, nor could a Fourier and a Comte as yet have *indicated* how to *put it into practice.*

To the zeal and liberality of Mr. Albert Brisbane, and to the scholarship of Mr. Henry Clapp, Jr., are English readers indebted for an introduction to Fourier's great work, "The Social Destiny of Man."† And the same class of readers are similarly indebted to Mr. Lombe and Miss Harriet Martineau‡

---

* "All the theologians of Wittemberg assembled to draw up an answer [to the Landgrave's petition to be allowed to have two wives], and the result was a compromise. He was allowed a double marriage, on condition that his second wife should not be publicly recognized."

"If, nevertheless, your highness is fully resolved to take a second wife, we are of opinion that the marriage should be secret."

"Given at Wittemberg, after the festival of St. Nicholas, 1539,—Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, Antony Corvin, Adam, John Lening, Justin Wintfert, Dionisius Melanther."—Michelet's "Life of Luther."

† Published by Calvin Blanchard.

‡ Between whom and Mr. Atkinson, there took place that admirable correspondence on the subject of the "Laws of Man's Nature and Develop-

(the latter aided by Professor Nichol) for being enabled to acquaint themselves with "The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte."*

These great works are carrying on a *constructive*, and therefore noiseless and unostentatious revolution; they do not (particularly the latter) appeal to the common understanding, and the masses will know but little about them, until they *feel* their beneficient effects. But the keen observer and the social artist perceive that they have already given a new tone to all the higher literature of Western Europe, and even, to some extent, to that of the United States.

'Tis strange that they who are capacitated to *think* truth, should so generally have made the unfortunate blunder of not seeing that by the masses, truth of any great degree of complexity can only be *felt*. Their religion is addressed almost wholly to their *feeling*. Their knock-down argument to all opposition, is, "*I feel it to be true.*" A more unreasonable scheme never emanated from Bedlam, than that of plying the masses with reason, on subjects so complicated as are religion and sociology. Has not the experiment uniformly proven the truth of what I here assert? Reason is, of course, *connected with* everything which a sane person voluntarily does or thinks of. It is *connected with* the construction of the steam engine; and should be similarly and *only* similarly connected with social architecture.

Numerous experiments to which the name of Fourier has been attached, have failed. But there was not one of them which bore the most distant resemblance to the system of the great master, whose name they so over-zealously and rashly appropriated.

A very successful trial of the *household economies* of Fourier has been going on in New York for the last three years, under the management of Mr. E. F. Underhill. His "*Cosmopolitan Hotel*" comprises four elegant five story brown stone front houses, situated in the most fashionable part of Fourteenth-street.

The world has been prevented from becoming acquainted with Fourier's magnificent discoveries in social architecture, mainly through the agency of the blackest aud most impudent

ment," republished in a neat volume by Mr. J. P. Mendum, publisher of the "Boston Investigator."

* Published by Calvin Blanchard.

falsehood ever uttered. Fourier's system has been denounced as communism; whereas it is the very opposite of that. Our present social hodge-podge is Skidmoreism itself, when compared with the *system* of which "The Social Destiny of Man," notwithstanding its *incidental* and *non-essential* errors, is a bold and true outline. Next in importance to the discoveries of Comte, are Fourier's with respect to the human passions, and with respect to the equitable adjustment of the claims of labor, skill, and capital.

But Fourier's system was, so to speak, the edifice in advance of the foundation on which alone it could stand. *Real* liberty, *substantial* happiness, and *practical* goodness, must have a *material* basis. That basis has been furnished by Auguste Comte.

Mr. Lewes, in his "Biographical History of Philosophy,"* says: "Comte is the Bacon of the nineteenth century. Like Bacon, he fully sees the cause of our intellectual anarchy, and also sees the cure. We have no hesitation in recording our conviction that the "Course de Philosophie Positive" is the greatest work of our century, and will form one of the mighty landmarks in the history of opinion. No one before him ever dreamed of treating social problems otherwise than upon theological or metaphysical methods. He first showed how possible—nay, how imperative—it was that social questions should be treated on the same footing with all other scientific questions."

And Mill, in his "System of Logic,"† speaks thus of "The Positive Philosophy:"—"A work which only requires to be better known, to place its author in the very highest class of European thinkers. . . . A sociological system widely removed from the vague and conjectural character of all former attempts, and worthy to take its place, at last, among established sciences. . . . A work which I hold to be far the greatest yet produced in the Philosophy of the Sciences. . . He (Comte) may truly be said to have created the philosophy of the higher mathematics. . . . Whose view of the philosophy of classification is the most erudite with which I am acquainted. . . . His works are the only source to which the reader can resort for a practical exemplifi-

* This work should be in the possession of every scientific lover of liberty. It is published by D. Appleton & Co.

† Published by Harper & Brothers.

cation of the study of social phenomena on the true principles of the Historical Method. Of that method I do not hesitate to pronounce them a model."

"Clearness and depth, comprehensiveness and precision have never, probably, been so remarkably united as in Auguste Comte," says Professor Gillespie, of Union College, New York.

The following extracts from an article (understood to be by Sir David Brewster) which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review," will also give some further idea of the aim and character of "The Positive Philosophy:"

"A work of profound science, marked with great acuteness of reasoning, and conspicuous for the highest attributes of intellectual power. It comprehends MATHEMATICS, ASTRONOMY, PHYSICS, and CHEMISTRY, or the sciences of *Inorganic* Bodies; and PHYSIOLOGY, and SOCIAL PHYSICS, or the sciences of *Organic* Bodies.

"Under the head of SOCIAL PHYSICS the author treats of the general structure of human societies, of the fundamental natural law of the development of the human species, and of the progress of civilization. This last Section is sub-divided into three heads—the THEOLOGICAL EPOCH, the METAPHYSICAL EPOCH, and the POSITIVE EPOCH—the first of these embracing FETISHISM, POLYTHEISM, and MONOTHEISM."

Referring to the Astronomical part of the work, the Reviewer says, "We could have wished to place before our readers some specimens of our author's manner of treating these difficult and deeply interesting topics—of his simple, yet powerful eloquence—of his enthusiastic admiration of intellectual superiority—of his accuracy as a historian, his honesty as a judge, and of his absolute freedom from all personal and national feelings."

But the mental effort which produced the "Positive Philosophy" was too much for the brain of any one man to make with impunity, as the subsequent writings of the great positivist show. With respect to these, and particularly to Comte's "Positive Religion," Mr. Lewes very considerately remarks,—"let us draw a veil over them;" and I, who have made Comte a study, will add, that any other view than this, with respect to the writings which Comte sent forth to the world *after* the "Positive Philosophy," is most unjust.

The clergy are at length aware that the slander and abuse which they have bellowed forth from the pulpit against Paine,

have advertised his works more effectually than ten per cent. of their own salaries could have done through the newspapers; and hence the profound silence which they maintain with respect to the *personality* of Comte, and to the *name* of "*The Positive Philosophy.*" Priests know that the world's old religion is dead; but they mean to prolong its decay to the utmost, in order to feed, like carrion crows, on its rotten carcass; they therefore take every precaution against having it stirred up.

Observe in what *general* terms the "black coats," as Humboldt styles the parsons, denounce the materialism with which all the high talent of the age in which we live is imbued. They do not wish to let their dupes know that such men as Humboldt and Comte did not believe in the existence of the extra-almighty pedant whom they seat on the throne of the universe.

We have already seen that the author of "Cosmos"* not only held superstition and its ministers in as utter contempt as as did he who wrote "The Age of Reason," but that he was furthermore a thorough materialist; and the author of "The Positive Philosophy" has mathematically annihilated a *God* who can have no *practical* existence to *man*, together with the supposed foundation of a faith, the further teaching of which can but hold human perfection in abeyance. Yet the aristocracy of Europe were proud of the companionship of Humboldt, and emperors and kings presented him with testimonials of their high regard.

As to Auguste Comte, it is rumored that the Emperor Napoleon III. held frequent conferences with him; and the encouragement which that monarch is giving to men of science is matter of public notoriety.

But how does "The Model Republic" compare with monarchical Europe in these vitally important matters? Is not the noise which, in the United States, is made about freedom, as hollow as is the din with which our loud-belled churches call their congregations to the worship of him who they nevertheless say enjoined secret devotion?

In a country where no *throned* sovereign bears sway, where no *crowned* pope sends forth his bull forbidding the offices of human kindness to be extended to those who have incurred his displeasure, what dread tyrant willed that Thomas Paine should be shunned by many of his illustrious compeers;—that his

* Republished by Messrs. Harper & Brothers.

bones should be refused a resting place beside those of even the *least* persecuting and vindictive of all the Christian sects; that his name should be almost left out of the history of the glorious deeds which his inspiration caused to be performed, and even to this day, be held in utter abhorrence by nearly all those for whose welfare his life and splendid talents were so cheerfully devoted? *Who* is that tyrant?

"Priestcraft!" readily answer they who zealously advocate *popular free discussion, and an appeal to popular opinion*, as a means of finding out how to deal with those most important and complicated of all affairs,—religion and government. "Priestcraft!" they exclaim; as they lavish their *carefully unsystemized* sociological *facts*, their critical expositions, and their logical deductions, upon the horrified, astounded and enraged, but not at all edified multitude.

Well, my friends, *between you and me*, I must acknowledge that you *have* slapped that tyrant's prime minister full in the face. Try it again. But first gather up your pearls, lest *the many* before whom you have indiscriminately cast them, and who want something of which *they* can make a far more *practical* and *satisfactory* use, turn upon and "rend you."

"Ignorance! of course we know that priestcraft thrives on ignorance. *Ignorance* is that tyrant;" methinks I hear you further answer.

Yes, my friends, ignorance *is* that tyrant. But still, the most important, and by far most difficult question remains unanswered. *He is not* ignorance of the fact that the Bible is of human origin. The Bible is but one of the weather-cocks which tell which way the wind of popular folly blows. The Koran is another, and so is the Book of Mormon. And they are all rather useful than otherwise, as they furnish suggestions as to the course to be pursued by scientific and artistic reformers. *He is not* ignorance with respect to reading, writing, geography, grammar, arithmetic, Greek, Latin; in short, *he is not* ignorance of anything which has hitherto been taught or thought of in any school or college.

"I'll tell you what *he is ignorance of*, presently; and, at the same time, I will demonstrate how to liberate man from his despotism, and rescue the memory of Thomas Paine from the reproach which has been so unjustly, so blindly, or else so *unintentionally* heaped upon it.

Are such rights as English Constitutionalism can give us

worth contending for? Independence is the only measure that *can* be of any avail; substantially said Thomas Paine to those more cautious rebels who, at the commencement of "the times that tried men's souls," were glooming over the miserable effects which half measures had produced.

Are such shams of rights as caucus-and-ballot-boxism can give us, worth spending any more time, and money, and agitation upon? I ask, and appeal to what has been most lyingly named free government in Greece, Rome, England, Venice, France, the United States, and wherever else it has been attempted to *make permanent* the *crisis stage* of progress which marks the departure from monarchy. No, my friends, Art-Liberty *alone*, can be of *any* avail.

Art-Liberty may now sound as strange as did American Independence when first pronounced by Thomas Paine; ay, and as treasonable, too. Still, I repeat, nothing short of Art-Liberty can prevent the freedom-experiment which Paine so powerfully incited, from failing in the United States, as badly as it has in every other country where it has been tried.

How far short of such failure is that experiment now? when statesmen, and philosophers, ay, and *philanthropists*, are seriously discussing the question, whether "free-laborers" or "slaves" have the most uncomfortable time of it?

Look at the opaque web of entanglement which our "representatives" have wove, or "enacted" for us, and called "law." Look at the wretched and expensive farces which the administerers of these "laws" play, under the name of "trials." Are caucusing, balloting, "constitutions," "laws," and *jury-trial-justice* the sum and substance of the *liberty* for which Paine stimulated that glorious band which Washington led, to sacrifice their lives? Is this the *end* of the revoluion which "Common Sense" instigated?

Was the earth fertilized and the ocean reddened with human blood, and were both earth and ocean strewn with the ashes and the wrecks of human skill and industry, in order to achieve demagogism? In fine, are nature's resources fully exhausted, only to produce such a miserable abortion that her highest being, man, abjures her for the "supernatural?" Surely this cannot be so.

Reader, did you ever notice the fact that the United States Government and that of Russia are, and have always been on remarkably loving terms with each other? Well, this is but

as natural as it is for "birds of a feather to flock together." The political systems of both Russia and America, are, about equally, as pure absolutisms as governments can be. In Russia, the head of the majority-despotism which tyrannizes, is designated by birth. The Russian Government is a simple despotism, modifiable by assassination. In the United States, the band of conspirators for wholesale violence and wrong,—the head, or directory of the majority despotism which tyrannizes, is designated by caucus, fraud, and ballot-box jugglery; aided by perjury, bribery, corruption, and by the occasional use of the first, the bludgeon, the dagger, and the pistol. The difference between Russian and American despotism is so non-essential, that no two great governments in the world have shown such marked good feeling for each other, as have that of the Czar and those favorites with whom he shares the spoils, and that of the President, by whom and his sycophants, the United States is freshly subjugated and plundered every four years.

But what do you mean by Art-Liberty? Methinks I hear those ask who have not already hid their stupidity *from themselves*, under that common cover of dullness,—"Utopia."

By Art-Liberty, my friends, I mean the *practical application* of *all* science and art *systemized*, as fast as unfolded. The only law which can govern a free state must be *discovered;* it must be drawn from the *whole of science and art;* not "enacted;" human law can no more be "enacted" than can physical law.

Art-Liberty will be the crowning art of arts in developing nature's resources, of discovering and modifying her laws, and of *combining her powers* till "creation" shall be *complete;* till supply shall be adequate to demand; till nature's grand *end*, which the aim of her highest consciousness *instinctively indicates*, is attained; till nature's highest organism, man, attains to happiness not only perfect, but lasting enough to *fully* satisfy this five-sense nature without recourse to "beyond the skies;" till all *physical* obstacles to man's *liberty to be happy* are removed, even to the unfriendliness of climate! Not, by such fanciful means as that great seer, Fourier, supposed, but wholly through the working, with nature, of science and art, which have conquered steam and electricity, and made so many other things which were inimical to man's happiness, the very means of promoting it; and which will make the good of everything,

through *use*, in exact proportion to its present evil, through *abuse* or *neglect*.

Man's leaders, must find out how to satisfy man's highest aspirations, instead of catering for his prejudices; instead of confirming him, by flattery and cajolery, in his false, supernaturalistic notions; instead of studying the trickery of representing and plundering him. And they will rapidly find this out, as soon as a knowledge (already attained) of the *unity of science*, spreads among them, and along with it, its correllate, —that all mankind are one organism, no individual of which can be indifferent to *each* and *all* of the others. Enlightened, far-seeing, *all-benefiting selfishness* will then take the place of short-sighted, suicidal, penny-wise pound-foolish cunning; and that barricade of hypocrisy,—duty, that most fallible of all guides,—conscience, and "virtue" and "vice," those most unscientific and mischievous expressions that have ever crept into the vocabulary of human folly, will be obsolete.

Let us draw a picture of the condition of things which the current schemes of politics, religion, moralism, "virtue," and "law" *must* very shortly produce, if they had unopposed sway —if the requirements of both our civil and religious guides were fully complied with :—

If all *contracts* in accordance with present "law" were fulfilled to the letter, and if all the "*duties*" enjoined by the present moralism were unflinchingly performed, and if all which "virtue" styles "vice" was entirely abstained from, and if what is now "free trade" according to "law," had a "fair field," how long would it take a millionth of the earth's inhabitants to accumulate *all* its wealth? In my opinion, it would not take ten generations to produce that reign of "law," "principle," "morality," "virtue," and "free trade," or "mind-your-own business,"—and-every-one-for-himself-ism, on the earth.

But there must be no stealing, swindling, or robbery, as *legally defined, on any* account; and there must be no sexual intercourse out of the bonds of monogamy, *even for bread;* and above all, there must be no acts, or even words of *treason*. The laboring man and the laboring woman, must patiently and slowly (nay, not very slowly I'm thinking) die on such wages as they who, *in perfect security*, hold all the wealth, chose to give; and those out of work must brave martyrdom to "*principle*," by starving, straightway, unless they can obtain a

"permit," to drag out a few months, possibly years, in sackcloth and on water-gruel in an *alms-house.**

In all soberness, I ask, is not this a fair statement of the case? and, therefore, is not an entire change, religious, social, and moral, the only thing that can cure present religious, social, and moral disease? And who are nearest to the "kingdom of heaven?" who are least obstructive to the "millenium?" they who are now considered moral, virtuous, and respectable, or they whom such term immoral, vicious, and the vilest of the vile?

The only thing that ever made me seriously *consider* whether or not "Jesus" was a divine personage, was the preference which he uniformly gave to "sinners," "publicans and harlots," even, over the "Scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites," who performed all which "the law" and moralism required. And I must confess that I am still astonished that *any* one should, almost two thousand years ago, so fully have understood what so very few, even now, have any conception of. Yet this, the strongest argument which can be adduced to prove "Christ's" divinity, the doctors of that divinity have never, to my knowledge, brought up. Need I add that the reason is very evident? Of course, were the doctors aforesaid to make a thorough use of this argument, they would upset the whole present political, legal, and moral scheme. Well, would it not be best to overthrow it by *any* means whatever? or, to put the question more justly, can present "institutions" be too soon or too thoroughly superseded by those which Art-Liberty, but for them, would produce?

Opinionism and moralism, like "supernaturalism," (of which they are the refinement) have ages since, exhausted what little power for good they ever had, and became so exceedingly morbific to the social organism, that they cannot be too speedily excreted. Reason and free discussion were once, in the fifth century, I believe, seriously engaged on the question as to whether angels could go from one point to another without passing through intermediate space; and I myself, in the nineteenth century, have heard reason and free discussion on the question as to whether there was or was not a personal devil;

* I claim to have here made a very liberal concession; for I have strong doubts as to whether old fogyism, if it had it *all* its own way, and had not the slightest fear of being disturbed, would furnish even alms-houses, sackcloth, and water-gruel to *any* of its victims; to those who were too "shiftless" to take care of themselves.

nay, that devil's tail was actually discussed and reasoned upon. How much progress have reason and free discussion made since the fifth century? Have they made any? Are we not indebted for every bit of liberty we enjoy now, more than mankind did then, to science and art? always excepting what little good reason and free discussion of subjectivism have done as very common and proportionably subordinate auxiliaries, during crisis-stages of revolution. Then, these weapons, when wielded by such men as Thomas Paine, *were* of use; nay *would have been* of use, had the social structure which they were the instruments of tearing down been replaced by one *really new*, instead of by one *built of the damaged, ay, even rotten materials of the old one.* Paine did all which he could be expected to do; but his noble efforts were not seconded; for they who wield his weapons now resemble those soldiers who, instead of attacking fresh foes, continue to thrust their swords into the bodies of the slain. Was Thomas Paine here to-day, his old remedies, religious and political *popular* free discussion and reasoning would be thrown aside; or only used to assist science and art to displace them in religious and state affairs. How otherwise could *he* be Thomas Paine? He who was the very incarnation of revolution? True, he trusted that he should "never use any other weapons than those of reason;"* but he had before trusted that British constitutionalism was the best possible thing for the State. Yet how widely and nobly did he afterwards change his course in that respect; and would he not *now* see full as much cause as he did *then*, for taking another tack? Can any sensible person, who would honor his memory, say that he would not? say that he would be satisfied with the despotism which caucus-and-ballot-boxism has palmed off on us, or with any of the means hitherto used to get rid of it?

Man's right to be self-governed is, equally with his desire to

---

* "The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall;" says Paine, in his dedication of "The Age of Reason" to his "fellow-citizens of the United States of America." But he had dreadful experience of the rebound against himself, which the blows that he dealt with that weapon caused. And superstition is fully as rampant with *the multitude* now, as it was before the "Age of Reason" was written; and it is as rife now, as it then was, even with the higher classes; with the exception that is clearly traceable to science and art. Every man of intelligence at all above the vulgar knows, that not only Ethan Allen, Jefferson, and Franklin "were infidels" as the phrase is, but that Lafayette, and, in fact, nearly all the other revolutionary worthies, no more believed in the "divinity" of "The Bible," than Paine did.

be so, *self-evident.* But what is more insultingly *termed* "elective" franchise, is the farthest thing possible from self-government. It is, except as a transient or *crisis-stage* expedient, of all fallacies the most monstrous. As a permanency, it has no type, and consequently no warrant throughout nature. In every instance where majorityism has become chronic, it has proved as bewildering and destructive to the social organism, as the worst insanity proves to the individual. There is no record of society's being afflicted with the caucus-and-ballot-box mania for any considerable length of time, without having to be confined in the straight jacket of military despotism; or prescribed a double dose of essentially the same kind of tyranny from which it had been so madly supposed that an escape had been made. What, then, I ask, in behalf of Thomas Paine, whose distinguishing characteristic was to "go ahead," is the use of fooling any longer with the speculative, abstract, tantalizing shadows of human rights, which our corrupt, spoil-seeking demagogues impudently palm off on us for liberty? And why persist longer in repeating the miserable religious and moral failures into which our religious and moral quacks plunge us?

To what purpose have both religion and politics been so freely discussed, for nearly a century past, in the United States, by all who had more tongue than brain, and more vanity than depth of research? This is not saying that *some* wise and very worthy people have not also been led into the fallacy that abstract subjectivism was sufficient to remedy despotism. I was once in that unfortunate predicament myself; and the axiom of Thomas Jefferson (I believe it was Jefferson's, at any rate it is the axiom of his *loudest* followers) was, that error may be safely trusted where *reason* is left free to combat it. But I ask in all soberness, has error been *safely* trusted in the United States, though reason is there as free to combat it as *the majority* will let it be? And with what good effect, so for as *social architecture* is concerned, have carefully culled, and almost as carefully isolated *facts* been laid before the multitude, whose views are necessarily confined to the specialities which constitute *their calling*, since the *acute* stage of revolution in this country?

I tell you that facts to be worth *anything*, must be systemized; and that, too, immeasurably more in social or state affairs than in any others; and that this requires the wisest heads that

can grow on human shoulders, aided by *all* science and art, and by the most laborious and uninterrupted preparation. Social Science is the *art of arts*, not the *art of political trickery.*

In spite of all the freedom of the tongue and of the press which the majority will allow to be exercised, or *can* allow to be exercised till social science and art take charge of education, is not our political system corrupt to the very core? Are not they who have charge of the public treasury a very gang of thieves? And are not they whom "elective franchise" places at the head of affairs, plunging the nation into brankruptcy every few years, and at shorter and shorter intervals, by their reckless wastefulness, in letting the life-blood of industry, as now carried on—money—pour *abroad* like water, for the sake of catching their dippers full of it?

And as to religion:—has not the empire state, New York, in 1860, enacted Sunday-laws which would have done credit to the Blue Code of Connecticut in 1650? Are not church-building, and church-going, and revivalism, ay, and Mormonism, rife among that very multitude—that highest court from whose dread decrees there is no *present* appeal, to whom free discussion and facts *have been* presented *to the extent they can be by present methods?*

The *popular* free-discussion of affairs of the last degree of complication—religious and state affairs—except during the *crisis period* of revolution, only renders that worst of despotisms, anarchy, chronic: it *seats* in the social organism, that political gangrene—demagogism—which has always hitherto, sooner or later, required the cauterization of military despotism (a remedy *all but* as bad as the disease), in order to get rid of—in order to save even civilization. Despotism is the most inveterate of all the diseases of the social organism which ignorance has inflicted; nay, it is a complication of *all* its diseases. What, my fellow-men, would any of you think of the physician who should consult with an individual organism with a view to taking that organism's opinion as to what course he (the physician) had best pursue in order to cure him (the organism) of scrofula, complicated with every other bodily disease to which flesh is heir? Would not the patient, if he had one spark of common sense left, order such a doctor out of doors? with "Sir, I expected aid from your science and your *healing art;* and did not employ you to mock and insult me in my wretchedness."

Would anyone who possessed a spark of reason, even, venture

at sea in a vessel, with respect to the management of which, the vote of all who happened to go on board was going to be taken? And do the managers of the ship of state require less preparation than do common sailors? Do they not require so much more *useful knowledge* than they have ever been qualified with, that they have always wrecked or capsized the ship of state, except where it is only a question of time when they will do so? Evidently, church and state management require art and skill infinitely superior to what "supernaturalism" and its legitimate child, monarchism, or its bastard issue, caucus-and-ballot-boxism, are capable of. From the dissecting room; the chemical laboratory; the astronomical observatory; physicians' and physiologists' study; in fine from all the schools of science and art, should human law be *declared*, instead of being "enacted" in legislative halls, by those who, in every respect besides political trickery, fraud, and "smartness," are perfect ignoramuses.

Nature *throughout*, must be so *modified* (not changed); so *liberated from the thraldom of antagonism or counteraction;* in short, so improved by art, that the conditions which now necessitate despotism and evil will be superseded by those which will make liberty, and all that is desirable, as spontaneous as is the order of the spheres.

Man naturally desires to be good. There is not, never was, and never can be, a sane human being who would not like to have things so arranged, that *every human desire could be fully gratified*, instead of, as now, almost wholly denied gratification; man's "holy" or "heavenly" desires,—the very quintessence of sensualness, are a *constant*, and will be an *everlasting* testimony to the truth of this.

Priestcraft cannot be put down till man obtains his "being's end and aim," or is satisfied that it is attainable, in this material, this perceptible, this sense-world. To desire must be to possess, with the exception (if it can be called an exception) of the intervention of just exertion enough to give to possession its *due* value. Mankind will, with few exceptions, scorn reason, so long as it arrays itself against *human instinct;* against what man *feels to be true.* And until science and art give man (or assures him that they can give him) the perfect and sufficiently lasting happiness which he instinctively knows that the power which created him *owes him* and *stands pledged* to give him or turn out to be an *almighty failure*, he will pursue that happi-

ness even beyond the grave; *with priestcraft for his guide, of course.*

Can nature or all existence, fail? and allow the drafts which, on the indisputable testimony of the human passion, she has authorized her highest beings to draw on her, to be protested? Surely, "supernaturalism" itself is less absurd than this.

Friends of human rights! Believers in progress! Is anything more certain, than that combined science and its corresponding art, or full and complete development, must prove adequate to all for which "miracle" can be intelligibly invoked?

Ignorance with respect to this, then; ignorance of how to *develop nature's resources*, and *modify and harmoniously combine her powers*, so as to liberate her tendency to perfection from all obstructions—so as that her means will be correspondent to her ends,—constitutes the tyrant in search of whom we started. There he stands! But he is not invulnerable, nor is his fearfully, ay, *all but* "supernaturally" strong fortress impregnable. Let us "up and at him," then as determinedly as our sires of glorious memory charged his minions at Bunker Hill. *Parleying*, as we have learned by long, sad experience, is sheer nonsense; quarter being out of the question. This arch enemy of mankind must be *annihilated* before liberty can be an *actuality*. And the religious faith of the human race must be transferred from the mysterious and impossible, and from their correlates, the subjective and speculative, to the intelligible and practical. And these must be shown capable of fulfilling man's highest aspirations, before he can *truly* understand the mission, and *fully* appreciate the worth of THOMAS PAINE.

I trust I have shown that, to conquer the tyrant which ignorance of *how to be free* constitutes, was the common aim, and the *real*, however glimmeringly perceived object, of the exertions of Rosseau, Paine, Comte, and all the other author-heroes and heroines, who have ever written. In conclusion allow me to propose a *crisis-question* for the *practical consultation* upon, of my friends, whose *religion* (if I may be allowed to accuse them of having *any*) reason and free discussion compose.

How can man be extricated from having to grovel *round* and *round* and *round* in the hopeless orbit which has mystery for its centre, monarchy for his aphelion, demagogism for itsperihelion, and unvarnished wretchedness or gilded misery for its whole course, except by scientifically, artistically, and *unitedly* creating the requisite conditions for *Actual Liberty?*

All have their hobby. Mine, it will be pretty clearly perceived is,—that *nature*, through *development*, will prove *all-sufficient*.

Come, all ye who delight in the amble of that well-tried hack, —popular religious, political, and sociological discussion, and who do not not like the complexion of *present* religious, political, and social institutions, and who are not enamoured of the millennium which I have shown would constitute their ultimatum :—If you object to *Art-Liberty*, please to let the world know definitely, what you *do* propose.

APPENDIX.

As one of the most heroic acts of Thomas Paine's life, and one which also showed the profoundness of his political wisdom, was his speech in opposition to the execution of Louis XVI. I wish to draw particular attention to it; and therefore give it a place in an Appendix; for I have observed that even the most cursory readers generally look at the *end* of a work.

This speech, Mr. Paine well understood, would expose him to the fiercest wrath of the Jacobins, who, sustained by the triumphant rabble, had resolved, in the king's case, to dispense with even the *forms* of "justice," to the extent of setting aside the rule which required the sanction of a two-thirds majority for the infliction of the death penalty. "We vote," protested Lanjuinais, when the balloting was ordered to commence, "under the daggers and the cannon of the factions."

In order to more fully understand in what fearful peril Mr. Paine voluntarily placed himself by delivering this speech, it will be necessary to know that "the factions" to which deputy Lanjuinais referred, were composed of the cruel monsters (and their abettors) who, a short time before, had "*labored*," as their horrible, but "*disinterested*" leader, Maillard, termed it, during thirty-six hours, at massacreing the unarmed prisoners, who had been committed on mere suspicion of not being friendly to the powers that then held sway; and for which "labor," its zealous and industrious performers, all covered with blood and brains, demanded instant payment of the committee of the municipality, threatening them with instant death if they did not comply.

"Do you think I have earned only twenty-four francs?" said one of these *principled* assassins, brandishing a massive weapon "why, I have slain forty with my own hands."

SPEECH OF THOMAS PAINE, AS DEPUTY IN THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF FRANCE, IN OPPOSITION TO THE EXECUTION OF THE KING.

CITIZEN PRESIDENT:

My hatred and abhorrence of absolute monarchy are sufficiently known; they originated in principles of reason and conviction, nor, except with life, can they ever be extirpated; but my compassion for the unfortunate, whether friend or enemy, is equally lively and sincere.

I voted that Louis should be tried, because it was necessary to afford proofs to the world of the perfidy, corruption and abomination of the French government.

The infinity of evidence that has been produced exposes them in the most glaring and hideous colors.

Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that if Louis Capet had been born in an obscure condition, had he lived within the circle of an amiable and respectable neighborhood, at liberty to practice the duties of domestic life, had he been thus situated I cannot believe that he would have shown himself destitute of social virtues; we are, in a moment of fermentation like this, naturally little indulgent to his vices, or rather to those of his government; we regard them with additional horror and indignation; not that they are more heinous than those of his predecessors, but because our eyes are now open, and the veil of delusion at length withdrawn; yet the lamentably degraded state to which he is actually reduced is surely far less imputable to him than to the constituent assembly which, of its own authority, without consent or advice of the people, restored him to the throne.

I was present at the time of the flight or abdication of Louis XVI., and when he was taken and brought back. The proposal of restoring to him the supreme power struck me with amazement; and although at that time I was not a citizen, yet as a citizen of the world, I employed all the efforts that depended on me to prevent it.

A small society composed only of five persons, two of whom are now members of the convention, took at that time the name of the Republican Club (Societé Republicaine). This society opposed the restoration of Louis, not so much on account of his personal offences, as in order to overthrow monarchy, and

to erect on its ruins the republican system and an equal representation.

With this design I traced out in the English language certain propositions which were translated, with some trifling alteration, and signed by Achilles Duchelclet, lieutenant-general in the army of the French republic, and at that time one of the five members which composed our little party; the law requiring the signature of a citizen at the bottom of each printed paper.

The paper was indignatly torn by Malouet, and brought forth in this very room as an article of accusation against the person who had signed it, the author, and their adherents; but such is the revolution of events that this paper is now revived, and brought forth for a very opposite purpose.

To remind the nation of the error of that unfortunate day, that fatal error of not having then banished Louis XVI. from its bosom, the paper in question was conceived in the following terms; and I bring it forward this day to plead in favor of his exile preferably to his death.

"Brethren, and fellow Citizens: The serene tranquility, the mutual confidence which prevailed amongst us during the time of the late king's escape, the indifference with which we beheld him return, are unequivocal proofs that the absence of the king is more desirable than his presence, and that he is not only a political superfluity but a grievous burthen pressing hard on the whole nation.

"Let us not be imposed on by sophisms: all that concerns this man is reduced to four points. He has abdicated the throne in having fled from his post. Abdication and desertion are not characterized by length of absence, but by the single act of flight. In the present instance the act is everything, and the time nothing.

"The nation can never give back its confidence to a man who, false to his trust, perjured to his oath, conspires a clandestine flight, obtains a fraudulent passport, conceals the king of France under the disguise of a valet, directs his course towards a frontier covered with traitors and deserters, and evidently meditates a return into our country with a force capable of imposing his own despotic laws. Ought his flight to be considered as his own act, or the act of those who fled with him? Was it a spontaneous resolution of his own, or was it inspired into him by others? The alternative is immaterial: whether fool or

hypocrite, idiot or traitor, he has proved himself equally unworthy of the vast and important functions that have been delegated to him.

"In every sense that the question can be considered, the reciprocal obligations which subsisted between us are dissolved. He holds no longer authority; we owe him no longer obedience; we see in him no more than an indifferent person; we can regard him only as Louis Capet.

"The history of France presents little else than a long series of public calamity which takes its source from the vices of her kings: we have been the wretched victims that have never ceased to suffer either for them or by them. The catalogue of their oppressions was complete, but to complete the sum of their crimes, treason was yet wanting; now the only vacancy is filled up, the dreadful list is full; the system is exhausted; there are no remaining errors for them to commit, their reign is consequently at an end.

"As to the personal safety of Mr. Louis Capet, it is so much the more confirmed, as France will not stop to degrade herself by a spirit of revenge against a wretch who has dishonored himself. In defending a just and glorious cause it is not possible to degrade it; and the universal tranquility which prevails is an undeniable proof that a free people know how to respect themselves."

Having thus explained the principles and exertions of the republicans at that fatal period when Louis was reinstated in full possession of the executive power which by his flight had been suspended, I return to the subject, and to the deplorable condition in which the man is now actually involved. What was neglected at the time of which I have been speaking has been since brought about by the force of necessity.

The wilful treacherous defects in the former constitution had been brought to light, the continual alarm of treason and conspiracy roused the nation and produced eventfully a second revolution. The people have beat down royalty, never, never to rise again; they have brought Louis Capet to the bar, and demonstrated in the face of the whole world, the intrigues, the falsehood, corruption, and rooted depravity of his government: there remains then only one question to be considered, what is to be done with this man?

For myself, I freely confess that when I reflect on the unaccountable folly that restored the executive power to his hands,

all covered as he was with perjuries and treason, I am far more ready to condemn the constituent assembly than the unfortunate prisoner, Louis Capet.

But, abstracted from every other consideration, there is one circumstance in his life which ought to cover or at least to palliate a great number of his transgressions, and this very circumstance affords the French nation a blessed occasion of extricating itself from the yoke of its kings without defiling itself in the impurities of their blood.

It is to France alone, I know, that the United States of America owe that support which enabled them to shake off an unjust and tyrannical yoke. The ardor and zeal which she displayed to provide both men and money were the natural consequences of a thirst for liberty. But as the nation at that time, restrained by the shackles of her own Government, could only act by means of a monarchical organ, this organ, whatever in other respects the object might be, certainly performed a good, a great action.

Let then these United States be the safeguard and asylum of Louis Capet. There, hereafter, far removed from the miseries and crimes of royalty, he may learn from the constant aspect of public prosperity, that the true system of government consists in fair, equal and honorable representation. In relating this circumstance, and in submitting this proposition, I consider myself as a citizen of both countries.

I submit it as a citizen of America who feels the debt of gratitude which he owes to every Frenchman. I submit it also as a man who cannot forget that kings are subject to human frailties. I support my proposition as a citizen of the French republic, because it appears to me the best, the most politic measure that can be adopted.

As far as my experience in public life extends, I have ever observed that the great mass of the people are invariably just, both in their intentions and in their objects; but the true method of accomplishing that effect, does not always show itself in the first instance. For example, the English nation has groaned under the despotism of the Stuarts. Hence Charles the Ist lost his life; yet Charles the IId was restored to all the full plenitude of power which his father had lost. Forty years had not expired when the same family strove to re-establish their ancient oppression; so the nation then banished from its territories the whole race. The remedy was effectual: the Stuart family sunk

into obscurity, confounded itself with the multitude, and is at length extinct.

The French nation has carried her measures of government to a greater length. France is not satisfied with exposing the guilt of the monarch, she has penetrated into the vices and horrors of the monarchy. She has shown them clear as daylight, and for ever crushed that system; and he, whoever he may be, that should ever dare to reclaim those rights, would be regarded not as a pretender, but punished as a traitor.

Two brothers of Louis Capet have banished themselves from the country, but they are obliged to comply with the spirit and etiquette of the courts where they reside.

They can advance no pretensions on their own account, so long as Louis shall live.

The history of monarchy in France was a system pregnant with crimes and murders, cancelling all natural ties, even those by which brothers are united. We know how often they have assassinated each other to pave a way to power. As those hopes which the emigrants had reposed in Louis XVI. are fled, the last that remains rests upon his death, and their situation inclines them to desire this catastrophe, that they may once again rally round a more active chief, and try one further effort under the fortune of the cidevant Monsieur and d'Artois. That such an enterprise would precipitate them into a new abyss of calamity and disgrace, it is not difficult to foresee; yet it might be attended with mutual loss, and it is our duty, as legislators, not to spill a drop of blood when our purpose may be effectually accomplished without it. It has been already proposed to abolish the punishment of death, and it is with infinite satisfaction that I recollect the humane and excellent oration pronounced by Robespierre on that subject in the constituent assembly.* This cause must find its advocates in every corner

* Pause, reader, and weep over the blindness of those reformers who depend on *principle* and *good intention*. Robespierre preached (oh, the "foolishness of [popular] preaching" where social science is in question) against the death-penalty! And there can be no reasonable doubt but that he was, in *principle*, opposed to it.

Marat once confidently exclaimed, in reference to his known incorruptness:—"A patriot so pure as myself, might communicate with the Devil." The appropriateness of his association of personages and *attributes*, he *probably* did not suspect.

When, oh when, will principle and moralism, and that main supporter of "vice,"—"virtue," give place to *practical goodness?*

"Fly swifter round ye wheels of time,
And bring the welcome day."

where enlightened politicians and lovers of humanity exist, and it ought above all to find them in this assembly.

Bad governments have trained the human race, and inured it to the sanguinary arts and refinements of punishment; and it is exactly the same punishment that has so long shocked the sight and tormented the patience of the people which now in their turn they practise in revenge on their oppressors.

But it becomes us to be strictly on our guard against the abomination and perversity of such examples. As France has been the first of European nations to amend her government, let her also be the first to abolish the punishment of death, and to find out a milder and more effectual substitute.

In the particular case now under consideration, I submit the following propositions,—1st. That the national convention shall pronounce the sentence of banishment on Louis and his family: 2nd. That Louis Capet shall be detained in prison till the end of the war, and then the sentence of banishment to be executed.

THE END.

AGE OF REASON.

FELLOW CITIZENS

OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

I PUT the following work under your protection. It contains my opinion upon Religion. You will do me the justice to remember, that I have always strenuously supported the Right of every Man to his opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies to another this right, makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it.

The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall.

Your affectionate friend and fellow citizen,

THOMAS PAINE.

Luxembourg, (Paris,) 8th Pluviose,
Second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible,
January 27, O. S. 1794.

THE AGE OF REASON.

PART FIRST.

It has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion; I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject, and from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow-citizens of all nations, and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it, could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work.

The circumstance that has now taken place in France of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of every thing appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary, lest, in the general wreck of superstition, of false systems of government, and false theology, we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this

work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive anything more destructive to morality than this?

Soon after I had published the pamphlet, "COMMON SENSE," in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow. Human inventions and priest-craft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communi-

cated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

Each of those churches show certain books, which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some other observations on the word *revelation*. Revelation when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man.

No man will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other, and, consequently, they are not obliged to believe it.

It is a contradiction in terms and ideas, to call anything a revelation that comes to us at second-hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication—after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts such as any

man qualified to be a law-giver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.*

When I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes too near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel myself, and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it.

When, also, I am told that a woman called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not; such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it; but we have not even this—for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves; it is only reported by others that *they said so*—it is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the Son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe a man to have been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds; the story, therefore, had nothing in it either new, wonderful or obscene; it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or Mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story.

It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian Church, sprung out of the tail of heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially be-

*It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children;* it is contrary to every principle of moral justice.

gotten. The trinity of gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand; the statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus; the deification of heroes change into the canonization of saints; the Mythologists had gods for everything; the Christian Mythologists had saints for everything; the church became as crowded with the one as the pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practiced was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before; by the Quakers since; and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any.

Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or anything else; not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds everything that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.

But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a

child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which everybody is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act, was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection; and, as they say, would not believe without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. *So neither will I*, and the reason is equally as good for me, and for every other person, as for Thomas.

It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured, that the books in which the account is related, were written by the persons whose names they bear; the best surviving evidence we now have respecting this affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the time this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say, *it is not true.* It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you by producing the people who say it is false.

That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests, and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary;

and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehensions of the effects of his doctrine as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life.

It is upon this plain narrative of facts, together with another case I am going to mention, that the Christian Mythologists, calling themselves the Christian Church, have erected their fable, which, for absurdity and extravagance, is not exceeded by anything that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients.

The ancient Mythologists tell us that the race of Giants made war against Jupiter, and that one of them threw a hundred rocks against him at one throw; that Jupiter defeated him with thunder, and confined him afterwards under Mount Etna, and that every time the Giant turns himself, Mount Etna belches fire.

It is here easy to see that the circumstance of the mountain, that of its being a volcano, suggested the idea of the fable; and that the fable is made to fit and wind itself up with that circumstance.

The Christian Mythologists tells us, that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterwards, not under a mountain, but in a pit. It is here easy to see that the first fable suggested the idea of the second; for the fable of Jupiter and the Giants was told many hundred years before that of Satan.

Thus far the ancient and the Christian Mythologists differ very little from each other. But the latter have contrived to carry the matter much further. They have contrived to connect the fabulous part of the story of Jesus Christ with the fable originating from Mount Etna; and, in order to make all the parts of the story tie together, they have taken to their aid the traditions of the Jews; for the Christian mythology is made up partly from the ancient mythology, and partly from the Jewish traditions.

The Christian Mythologists after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the Garden of Eden in the shape of a snake or a serpent, and in that

shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no way surprised to hear a snake talk; and the issue of this *tete-a-tete* is, that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind.

After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the church Mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back to the pit; or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him, (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain,) or have put him *under* a mountain, as the former Mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women and doing more mischief. But instead of this, they leave him at large, without even obliging him to give his parole—the secret of which is, that they could not do without him; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him ALL the Jews, ALL the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world besides, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian mythology?

Having thus made an insurrection and a battle in Heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded—put Satan into the pit—let him out again—giving him a triumph over the whole creation—damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these Christian Mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man, Jesus Christ, to be at once both God and Man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotton, on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple.

Putting aside everything that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this story is.

In order to make for it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being, whom they call Satan, a power equally as great, if not greater than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given him the power of liberating himself from the pit, after what they call his fall, but they have made that power increase afterwards to infinity. Before this fall they

represent him only as an angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall, he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He exists everywhere, and at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

Not content with this deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating, by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man.

Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit *himself* on a cross, in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd—less contradictory. But, instead of this, they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall.

That many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime) is what I have no doubt of. In the first place, they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed anything else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural anything is, the more is it capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration.

But if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes? Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born—a world furnished to our hands, that cost us nothing? Is it we that light up the sun, that pour down the rain, and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or wake, the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things, and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us? Can our gross feelings be excited by no other subjects than tragedy and suicide? Or is the gloomy pride of man become so intolerable, that nothing can flatter it but a sacrifice of the Creator?

I know that this bold investigation will alarm many, but it would be paying too great a compliment to their credulity to forbear it on that account; the times and the subject demand it to be done. The suspicion that the theory of what is called the Christian church is fabulous, is becoming very extensive in all countries; and it will be a consolation to men staggering under that suspicion, and doubting what to believe and what to disbelieve, to see the subject freely investigated. I therefore pass on to an examination of the books called the Old and New Testament.

These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation (which, by the bye, is a book of riddles that requires a revelation to explain it), are, we are told, the word of God. It is, therefore, proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this qeestion is, that nobody can tell, except that we tell one another so. The case historically appears to be as follows:

When the church Mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament, are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up.

Be this as it may, they decided by *vote* which of the books out of the collection they had made, should be the WORD OF GOD, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes, were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise—for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of, they called themselves by the general name of the Church; and this is all we know of the matter.

As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing these books to be the word of God, than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, I come, in the next place, to examine the internal evidence contained in the books themselves.

In the former part of this Essay, I have spoken of revela-

tion.—I now proceed further with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question.

Relevation is a communication of something, which the person, to whom that thing is revealed, did not know before. For if I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor to enable me to tell it, or to write it.

Revelation, therefore, cannot be applied to anything done upon earth, of which man is himself the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal part of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word revelation, and, therefore, is not the word of God.

When Samson ran off with the gate-posts of Gaza, if he ever did so, (and whether he did or not is nothing to us,) or when he visited his Delilah, or caught his foxes, or did any thing else, what has revelation to do with these things? If they were facts, he could tell them himself; or his secretary, if he kept one, could write them, if they were worth either telling or writing; and if they were fictions revelation could not make them true; and whether true or not, we are neither the better nor the wiser for knowing them. When we contemplate the immensity of that Being, who directs and governs the incomprehensible WHOLE, of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God.

As to the account of the Creation, with which the book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt; and after their departure from that country, they put it at the head of their history, without telling (as it is most probable) that they did not know how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens, shows it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly: it is nobody that speaks; t is nobody that hears; it is addressed to nobody; it has neither first, second, or third person; it has every criterion of being a tradition; it has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying.*

Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too

good a judge of such subjects to put his name to that account. He had been educated among the Egyptians, who were a people as well skilled in science, and particularly in astronomy, as any people of their day; and the silence and caution that Moses observes, in not authenticating the account, is a good negative evidence that he neither told it nor believed it.—The case is, that every nation of people has been world-makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of world-making as any of the rest; and as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not choose to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said of many other parts of the Bible.

Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and tortuous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel.

We scarcely meet with anything, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. In the anonymous publications, the Psalms, and the Book of Job, more particularly in the latter, we find a great deal of elevated sentiment reverentially expressed of the power and benignity of the Almighty; but they stand on no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before that time as since.

The Proverbs which are said to be Solomon's, though most probably a collection (because they discover a knowledge of life, which his situation excluded him from knowing) are an instructive table of ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin.

All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the Prophets, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together—and those works still retain the air and style of poetry, though in translation.*

*As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry, unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note.

Poetry consists principally in two things—imagery and composition. The com-

There is not, throughout the whole book called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word *prophet*, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word *prophesying* meant the art of making poetry. It also meant the art of playing poetry to a tune upon any instrument of music.

We read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns—of prophesying with harps, with psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of prophesying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning, or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptuous, because we have changed the meaning of the word.

We are told of Saul being among the *prophets*, and also that he prophesied; but we are not told what *they prophesied*, nor what *he prophesied*. The case is, there was nothing to tell; for these prophets were a company of musicians and poets, and Saul joined in the concert, and this was called *prophesying*.

The account given of this affair in the book called Samuel, is, that Saul met a *company* of prophets; a whole company of them! coming down with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp, and that they prophesied, and that he prophesied with them. But it appears afterwards, that Saul prophesied badly; that is, performed his part badly; for it

position of poetry differs from that of prose in the manner of mixing long and short syllables together. Take a long syllable out of a line of poetry, and put a short one in the room of it, or put a long syllable where a short one should be, and that line will lose its poetical harmony. It will have an effect upon the line like that of misplacing a note in a song.

The imagery in these books, called the prophets, appertains altogether to poetry. It is fictitious, and often extravagant, and not admissible in any other kind of writing than poetry.

To show that these writings are composed in poetical numbers, I will take ten syllables, as they stand in the book, and make a line of the same number of syllables, (heroic measure) that shall rhyme with the last word. It will then be seen that the composition of these books is poetical measure. The instance I shall produce is from Isaiah :—

> "*Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear O earth!*"
> 'Tis God himself that calls attention forth.

Another instance I shall quote is from the mournful Jeremiah, to which I shall add two other lines, for the purpose of carrying out the figure, and showing the intention of the poet.

> "*O, that mine head were waters and mine eyes*"
> Were fountains flowing like the liquid skies;
> Then would I give the mighty flood release,
> And weep a deluge for the human race.

is said, that, an "*evil spirit from God*"* came upon Saul, and he prophesied.

Now, were there no other passage in the book called the Bible, than this, to demonstrate to us that we have lost the original meaning of the word *prophesy*, and substituted another meaning in its place, this alone would be sufficient; for it is impossible to use and apply the word *prophesy*, in the place it is here used and applied, if we give to it the sense which latter times have affixed to it. The manner in which it is here used strips it of all religious meaning, and shows that a man might then be a prophet, or he might *prophesy*, as he may now be a poet or musician, without any regard to the morality or immorality of his character. The word was originally a term of science, promiscuously applied to poetry and to music, and not restricted to any subject upon which poetry and music might be exercised.

Deborah and Barak are called prophets, not because they predicted anything, but because they composed the poem or song that bears their name, in celebration of an act already done. David is ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician, and was also reputed to be (though perhaps very erroneously) the author of the Psalms. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not called prophets; it does not appear from any accounts we have, that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry.

We are told of the greater and the lesser prophets They might as well tell us of the greater and the lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense.—But there are degrees in poetry, and therefore the phrase is reconcilable to the case, when we understand by it the greater and the lesser poets.

It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by showing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken, and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the labored commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth

* As those men who call themselves divines and commentators, are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, that of *an evil spirit of God*. I keep to my text—keep to the meaning of the word prophesy.

disputing about. In many things, however, the writings of the Jewish poets deserve a better fate than that of being bound up, as they are now, with the trash that accompanies them, under the abused name of the word of God.

If we permit ourselves to conceive right ideas of things, we must necessarily affix the idea, not only of unchangeableness, but of the utter impossibility of any change taking place, by any means or accident whatever, in that which we would honor with the name of the word of God; and therefore the word of God cannot exist in any written or human language.

The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of an universal language which renders translation necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of willful alteration, are of themselves evidences that the human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the word of God. The word of God exists in something else.

Did the book called the Bible, excel in purity of ideas and expression all the books now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith, as being the word of God, because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But when I see throughout the greater part of this book, scarcely anything but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonor my Creator by calling it by his name.

Thus much for the Bible; I now go on to the book called the *New* Testament! that is, the *new* will, as if there could be two wills of the Creator.

Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or *procured it to be written* in his lifetime. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament were written after his death. He was a Jew by birth and by profession; and he was the son of God in like manner that every other person is—for the Creator is the Father of All.

The first four books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, do not give a history of the life of Jesus Christ, but only detached anecdotes of him. It appears from these books

that the whole time of his being a preacher was not more than eighteen months; and it was only during this short time that those men became acquainted with him. They make mention of him at the age of twelve years, sitting, they say, among the Jewish doctors, asking and answering them questions. As this was several years before their acquaintance with him began, it is most probable they had this anecdote from his parents. From this time there is no account of him for about sixteen years. Where he lived, or how he employed himself during this interval, is not known. Most probably he was working at his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter. It does not appear that he had any school education, and the probability is, that he could not write, for his parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born.

It is somewhat curious that the three persons whose names are the most universally recorded, were of very obscure parentage. Moses was a foundling; Jesus Christ was born in a stable; and Mahomet was a mule driver. The first and the last of these men were founders of different systems of religion; but Jesus Christ founded no new system. He called men to the practice of moral virtues, and the belief of one God. The great trait in his character is philanthropy.

The manner in which he was apprehended, shows that he was not much known at that time; and it shows, also, that the meetings he then held with his followers were in secret; and that he had given over or suspended preaching publicly. Judas could no otherwise betray him than by giving information where he was and pointing him out to the officers that went to arrest him; and the reason for employing and paying Judas to do this could arise only from the cause already mentioned, that of his not being much known, and living concealed.

The idea of his concealment, not only agrees very ill with his reputed divinity, but associates with it something of pusillanimity; and his being betrayed, or in other words, his being apprehended, on the information of one of his followers, shows that he did not intend to be apprehended, and consequently that he did not intend to be crucified.

The Christian Mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on *purpose to die.* Would it not then, have been the same if he had died of a

fever, or of the small pox, of old age, or of anything else?

The declaratory sentence which, they say, was passed upon Adam, in case he eat of the apple, was not, that *thou shalt surely be crucified, but, thou shalt surely die*—the sentence of death, and not the manner of dying. Crucifixion, therefore, or any other particular manner of dying, made no part of the sentence that Adam was to suffer, and consequently, even upon their own tactics, it could make no part of the sentence that Christ was to suffer in the room of Adam. A fever would have done as well as a cross, if there was any occasion for either.

The sentence of death, which they tell us, was thus passed upon Adam, must either have meant dying naturally, that is, ceasing to live, or have meant what those Mythologists call damnation; and consequently, the act of dying on the part of Jesus Christ, must, according to their system, apply as a prevention to one or other of these two *things* happening to Adam and to us.

That it does not prevent our dying is evident, because we all die; and if their accounts of longevity be true, men die faster since the crucifixion than before; and with respect to the second explanation, (including with it the *natural death* of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the *eternal death or damnation* of all mankind,) it is impertinently representing the Creator as coming off, or revoking the sentence, by a pun or a quibble upon the word *death*. That manufacturer of quibbles, St. Paul, if he wrote the books that bear his name, has helped this quibble on by making another quibble upon the word *Adam*. He makes there to be two Adams; the one who sins in fact, and suffers by proxy; the other who sins by proxy, and suffers in fact. A religion thus interlarded with quibble, subterfuge, and pun, has a tendency to instruct its professors in the practice of these arts. They acquire the habit without being aware of the cause.

If Jesus Christ was the being which those Mythologists tell us he was, and that he came into this world to *suffer*, which is a word they sometimes use instead of *to die*, the only real suffering he could have endured, would have been *to live*. His existence here was a state of exilement or transportation from Heaven, and the way back to his original country was to die.—In fine, everything in this strange system is the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is the reverse of

truth, and I become so tired of examining into its inconsistencies and absurdities, that I hasten to the conclusion of it, in order to proceed to something better.

How much, or what parts of the books called the New Testament, were written by the persons whose names they bear, is what we can know nothing of, neither are we certain in what language they were originally written. The matters they now contain may be classed under two heads—anecdote and epistolary correspondence.

The four books already mentioned, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, are altogether anecdotal. They relate events after they had taken place. They tell what Jesus Christ did and said, and what others did and said to him; and in several instances they relate the same event differently. Revelation is necessarily out of the question with respect to those books; not only because of the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of facts by the person who saw them done, nor to the relating or recording of any discourse or conversation by those who heard it. The book called the Acts of the Apostles (an anonymous work) belongs also to the anecdotal part.

All the other parts of the New Testament, except the book of enigmas, called the Revelations, are a collection of letters under the name of epistles; and the forgery of letters has been such a common practice in the world, that the probability is at least equal, whether they are genuine or forged. One thing, however, is much less equivocal, which is, that out of the matters contained in those books, together with the assistance of some old stories, the church has set up a system of religion very contradictory to the character of the person whose name it bears. It has set up a religion of pomp and of revenue, in pretended imitation of a person whose life was humility and poverty.

The invention of purgatory, and of the releasing of souls therefrom, by prayers, bought of the church with money; the selling of pardons, dispensations and indulgences, are revenue laws, without bearing that name or carrying that appearance. But the case nevertheless is, that those things derive their origin from the paroxysm of the crucifixion and the theory deduced therefrom, which was, that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious services for him. The probability, therefore, is, that

the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption (which is said to have been accomplished by the act of one person in the room of another) was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon; and that the passages in the books upon which the idea of theory of redemption is built, have been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose. Why are we to give this church credit, when she tells us that those books are genuine in every part, any more than we give her credit for everything else she has told us; or for the miracles she says she has performed? That she *could* fabricate writings is certain, because she could write; and the composition of the writings in question, is of that kind that anybody might do it; and that she *did* fabricate them is not more inconsistent with probability, than that she could tell us, as she has done, that she could and did work miracles.

Since, then, no external evidence can, at this long distance of time, be produced to prove whether the church fabricated the doctrines called redemption or not, (for such evidence, whether for or against, would be subject to the same suspicion of being fabricated,) the case can only be referred to the internal evidence which the thing carries within itself; and this affords a very strong presumption of its being a fabrication. For the internal evidence is, that the theory or doctrine of redemption has for its basis an idea of pecuniary justice, and not that of moral justice.

If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself, and pay it for me; but if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed; moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself. To suppose justice to do this, is to destroy the principle of its existence, which is the thing itself; it is then no longer justice; it is indiscriminate revenge.

This single reflection will show that the doctrine of redemption is founded on a mere pecuniary idea, corresponding to that of a debt, which another person might pay; and as this pecuniary idea corresponds again with the system of second redemptions, obtained through the means of money given to the church for pardons, the probability is, that the

same persons fabricated both one and the other of those theories, and that, in truth, there is no such thing as redemption; that it is fabulous, and that man stands in the same relative condition with his Maker he ever did stand, since man existed, and that it is his greatest consolation to think so.

Let him believe this, and he will live more consistently and morally, than by any other system; it is by his being taught to contemplate himself as an out-law, as an out-cast, as a beggar, as a mumper, as one thrown, as it were, on a dunghill, at an immense distance from his Creator, and who must make his approaches by creeping and cringing to intermediate beings, that he conceives either a contemptuous disregard for everything under the name of religion, or becomes indifferent, or turns what he calls, devout. In the latter case, he consumes his life in grief, or the affectation of it; his prayers are reproaches; his humility is ingratitude; he calls himself a worm, and the fertile earth a dunghill; and all the blessings of life by the thankless name of vanities; he despises the choicest gift of God to man—the GIFT OF REASON; and having endeavored to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it *human reason*, as if man could give reason to himself.

Yet, with all this strange appearance of humility, and this contempt for human reason, he ventures into the boldest presumptions; he finds fault with everything; his selfishness is never satisfied; his ingratitude is never at an end. He takes on himself to direct the Almighty what to do, even in the government of the universe; he prays dictatorially; when it is sunshine he prays for rain, and when it is rain, he prays for sunshine; he follows the same idea in everything that he prays for; for what is the amount of all his prayers, but an attempt to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does? It is as if he were to say—thou knowest not so well as I.

But some perhaps will say—Are we to have no word of God—no revelation? I answer, Yes: there is a word of God; there is a revelation.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD: And it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

Human language is local and changeable, and is, therefore, incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth to the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviours believed, and continued to believe, for several centuries (and that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers and the experience of navigators), that the earth was flat like a trencher, and that a man might walk to the end of it.

But how was Jesus Christ to make anything known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other; and as to translations, every man who knows anything of languages, knows that it was impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without not losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; and besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end, be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this, that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends, from a natural inability of the power to the purpose; and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end; but human language, more especially as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information, and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man.

It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It

cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the Creation.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And, incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time.

In like manner of reasoning, everything we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist; and this first cause, man calls God.

It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding anything; and in this case it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason?

Almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey to us any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm; I recollect no other. Those parts are true *deistical* compositions; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God, they refer to no other book, and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

I insert in this place the 19th Psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it:

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand.
Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that 'round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.
What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found,
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing as they shine,
THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE.

What more does man want to know, than that the hand or power that made these things is Divine, is Omnipotent? Let him believe this with the force it is impossible to repel, if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

The allusions in Job have, all of them, the same tendency with this Psalm; that of deducing or proving a truth that would be otherwise unknown, from truths already known.

I recollect not enough of the passages in Job to insert them correctly; but there is one occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions that admit of distinct answers.

First—Canst thou by searching find out God? Yes; because, in the first place, I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by *searching* into the nature of other things, I find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is, that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God.

Secondly—Canst thou find out the Almighty to *perfection?* No; not only because the power and wisdom He has manifested in the structure of the Creation that I behold is to me incomprehensible, but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom, by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist.

It is evident that both of these questions are put to the reason of the person to whom they are supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively, that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary, and even absurd, to have put a second question, more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes; reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other.

I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that convey any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the subject they dwell upon, that of a man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the Creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ, as a remedy against distrustful care. "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin." This,

however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job and in the 19th Psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man.

As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism—a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of manism with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker an opaque body, which it calls a Redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.

The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning every thing upside down, and representing it in reverse; and among the revolutions it has thus magically produced, it has made a revolution in theology.

That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is the true theology.

As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions and of human fancies *concerning* God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the Christian system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

The Book of Job and the 19th Psalm, which even the Church admits to be more ancient than the chronological order in which they stand in the book called the Bible, are theological orations conformable to the original system of theology. The internal evidence of those orations proves to a demonstration that the study and contemplation of the works of creation, and of the power and wisdom of God, revealed and manifested in those works, made a great part of the religious devotion of the times in which they were written; and it was this devotional study and contemplation that led to the discovery of the principles upon which, what

are now called sciences, are established; and it is to the discovery of these principles that almost all the arts that contribute to the convenience of human life, owe their existence. Every principal art has some science for its parent, though the person who mechanically performs the work does not always, and but very seldom, perceive the connection.

It is a fraud of the Christian system to call the sciences *human invention*; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles; he can only discover them.

For example—every person who looks at an almanac sees an account when an eclipse will take place, and he sees also that it never fails to take place according to the account there given. This shows that man is acquainted with the laws by which the heavenly bodies move. But it would be something worse than ignorance, were any Church on earth to say that those laws are a human invention. It would also be ignorance, or something worse, to say that the scientific principles, by the aid of which man is enabled to calculate and foreknow when an eclipse will take place, are a human invention. Man cannot invent a thing that is eternal and immutable; and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must, and are, of necessity, as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move, or they could not be used as they are to ascertain the time when, and the manner how, an eclipse will take place.

The scientific principles that man employs to obtain the foreknowledge of an eclipse, or of any thing else, relating to the motion of the heavenly bodies, are contained chiefly in that part of science which is called trigonometry, or the properties of a triangle, which, when applied to the study of the heavenly bodies, is called astronomy; when applied to direct the course of a ship on the ocean, it is called navigation; when applied to the construction of figures drawn by rule and compass, it is called geometry; when applied to the construction of plans of edifices, it is called architecture; when applied to the measurement of any portion of the surface of the earth, it is called land-surveying. In fine, it is the soul of science; it is an eternal truth; it contains the

mathematical demonstration of which man speaks, and the extent of its uses is unknown.

It may be said that man can make or draw a triangle, and therefore a triangle is a human invention.

But the triangle, when drawn, is no other than the image of the principle; it is a delineation to the eye, and from thence to the mind, of a principle that would otherwise be imperceptible. The triangle does not make the principle, any more than a candle taken into a room that was dark, makes the chairs and tables that before were invisible. All the properties of a triangle exist independently of the figure, and existed before any triangle was drawn or thought of by man. Man had no more to do in the formation of those properties or principles, than he had to do in making the laws by which the heavenly bodies move; and therefore the one must have the same Divine origin as the other.

In the same manner as, it may be said, that man can make a triangle, so also, may it be said, he can make the mechanical instrument called a lever; but the principle, by which the lever acts, is a thing distinct from the instrument, and would exist if the instrument did not; it attaches itself to the instrument after it is made; the instrument, therefore, can act no otherwise that it does act; neither can all the efforts of human invention make it act otherwise—that which, in all such cases, man calls the *effect*, is no other than the principle itself rendered perceptible to the senses.

Since, then, man cannot make principles, from whence did he gain a knowledge of them, so to be able to apply them, not only to things on earth, but to ascertain the motion of bodies so immensely distant from him as all the heavenly bodies are? From whence, I ask, *could* he gain that knowledge, but from the study of the true theology?

It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever-existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific principles, as if he had the power of constructing an universe; but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of

the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together, without any apparent contact, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch; but could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say that another *canonical book* of the Word of God had been discovered.

If man could alter the properties of the lever, so also could he alter the properties of the triangle; for a lever (taking that sort of lever which is called a steel-yard, for the sake of explanation) forms when in motion, a triangle. The line it descends from, (one point of that line being in the fulcrum,) the line it descends to, and the cord of the arc, which the end of the lever describes in the air, are the three sides of a triangle. The other arm of the lever describes also a triangle; and the corresponding sides of those two triangles, calculated scientifically, or measured geometrically; and also the sines, tangents, and secants generated from the angles, and geometrically measured, have the same proportions to each other, as the different weights have that will balance each other on the lever, leaving the weight of the lever out of the case.

It may also be said, that man can make a wheel and axis; that he can put wheels of different magnitudes together, and produce a mill. Still the case comes back to the same point, which is, that he did not make the principle that gives the wheels those powers. That principle is as unalterable as in the former case, or rather it is the same principle under a different appearance to the eye.

The power that two wheels of different magnitudes have upon each other, is in the same proportion as if the semi-diameter of the two wheels were joined together and made into that kind of lever I have described, suspended at the part where the semi-diameters join; for the two wheels, scientifically considered, are no other than the two circles generated by the motion of the compound lever.

It is from the study of the true theology that all our knowledge of science is derived, and it is from that knowledge that all the arts have originated.

The Almighty Lecturer, by displaying the principles of

science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and to imitation. It is as if He had said to the inhabitants of this globe, that we call ours, "I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER."

Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding, to an incomprehensible distance, an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Or of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the north star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible? A less power of vision would have been sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were given only to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desert of space glittering with shows.

It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens, as the book and school of science, that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates the subject in this light, he sees an additional motive for saying, that *nothing was made in vain;* for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing.

As the Christian system of faith has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning. That which is now called learning, was not learning, originally. Learning does not consist, as the schools now make it consist, in the knowledge of languages, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names.

The Greeks were a learned people, but learning with them did not consist in speaking Greek, any more than in a Roman's speaking Latin, or a Frenchman's speaking French, or an Englishman's speaking English. From what we know of the Greeks, it does not appear that they knew or studied any language but their own, and this was one cause of their becoming so learned; it afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies. The

schools of the Greeks were schools of science and philosophy, and not of languages; and it is in the knowledge of the things that science and philosophy teach, that learning consists.

Almost all the scientific learning that now exists, came to us from the Greeks, or the people who spoke the Greek language. It, therefore, became necessary for the people of other nations, who spoke a different language, that some among them should learn the Greek language, in order that the learning the Greeks had, might be made known in those nations, by translating the Greek books of science and philosophy into the mother tongue of each nation.

The study, therefore, of the Greek language (and in the same manner for the Latin) was no other than the drudgery business of a linguist; and the language thus obtained, was no other than the means, as it were the tools, employed to obtain the learning the Greeks had. It made no part of the learning itself; and was so distinct from it, as to make it exceedingly probable that the persons who had studied Greek sufficiently to translate those works, such, for instance, as Euclid's Elements, did not understand any of the learning the works contained.

As there is now nothing new to be learned from the dead languages, all the useful books being already translated, the languages are become useless, and the time expended in teaching and learning them is wasted. So far as the study of languages may contribute to the progress and communication of knowledge, (for it has nothing to do with the *creation* of knowledge,) it is only in the living languages that new knowledge is to be found; and certain it is, that, in general, a youth will learn more of a living language in one year, than of a dead language in seven; and it is but seldom that the teacher knows much of it himself. The difficulty of learning the dead languages does not arise from any superior abstruseness in the languages themselves, but in their *being dead*, and the pronunciation entirely lost. It would be the same thing with any other language when it becomes dead. The best Greek linguist that now exists, does not understand Greek so well as a Grecian ploughman did, or a Grecian milkmaid; and the same for the Latin, compared with a ploughman or milkmaid of the Romans; it would therefore be advantageous to the state of learning to abolish the study

of the dead languages, and to make learning consist, as it originally did, in scientific knowledge.

The apology that is sometimes made for continuing to teach the dead languages is, that they are taught at a time, when a child is not capable of exerting any other mental faculty than that of memory; but that is altogether erroneous. The human mind has a natural disposition to scientific knowledge, and to the things connected with it. The first and favorite amusement of a child, even before it begins to play, is that of imitating the works of man. It builds houses with cards or sticks; it navigates the little ocean of a bowl of water with a paper boat, or dams the stream of a gutter, and contrives something which it calls a mill; and it interests itself in the fate of its works with a care that resembles affection. It afterwards goes to school, where its genius is killed by the barren study of a dead language, and the philosopher is lost in the linguist.

But the apology that is now made for continuing to teach the dead languages, could not be the cause, at first, of cutting down learning to the narrow and humble sphere of linguistry; the cause, therefore, must be sought for elsewhere. In all researches of this kind, the best evidence that can be produced, is the eternal evidence the thing carries with itself, and the evidence of circumstances that unites with it; both of which, in this case, are not difficult to be discovered.

Putting, then, aside, as a matter of distinct consideration, the outrage offered to the moral justice of God, by supposing him to make the innocent suffer for the guilty, and also the loose morality and low contrivance of supposing him to change himself into the shape of a man, in order to make an excuse to himself for not executing his supposed sentence upon Adam; putting, I say, those things aside as a matter of distinct consideration, it is certain that what is called the Christian system of faith, including in it the whimsical account of the creation—the strange story of Eve—the snake and the apple—the ambiguous idea of a man-god—the corporal idea of the death of a god—the mythological idea of a family of gods, and the Christian system of arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason, that God hath given to man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom

of God, by the aid of the sciences, and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made.

The setters-up therefore, and the advocates of the Christian system of faith, could not but foresee that the continually progressive knowledge that man would gain, by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God, manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of Creation, would militate against, and call into question, the truth of their system of faith; and therefore it became necessary to their purpose to cut learning down to a size less dangerous to their project, and this they effected by restricting the idea of learning to the dead study of dead languages.

They not only rejected the study of science out of the Christian schools, but they persecuted it; and it is only within about the last two centuries that the study has been revived. So late as 1610, Galileo, a Florentine, discovered and introduced the use of telescopes, and by applying them to observe the motions and appearance of the heavenly bodies, afforded additional means for ascertaining the true structure of the universe. Instead of being esteemed for those discoveries, he was sentenced to renounce them, or the opinions resulting from them, as a damnable heresy. And, prior to that time, Vigilius was condemned to be burned for asserting the antipodes, or in other words, that the earth was a globe, and habitable in every part where there was land; yet the truth of this is now too well known even to be told.

If the belief of errors not morally bad did no mischief, it would make no part of the moral duty of man to oppose and remove them. There was no moral ill in believing the earth was flat like a trencher, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that it was round like a globe; neither was there any moral ill in believing that the Creator made no other world than this, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that he made millions, and that the infinity of space is filled with worlds. But when a system of religion is made to grow out of a supposed system of creation that is not true, and to unite itself therewith in a manner almost inseparable therefrom, the case assumes an entirely different ground. It is then that errors, not morally bad, become fraught with the same mischiefs as if they were. It is then that the truth, though otherwise indifferent itself, becomes an

essential, by becoming the criterion, that either confirms by corresponding evidence, or denies by contradictory evidence, the reality of the religion itself. In this view of the case, it is the moral duty of man to obtain every possible evidence that the structure of the heavens, or any other part of creation affords, with respect to systems of religion. But this, the supporters or partisans of the Christian system, as if dreading the result, incessantly opposed, and not only rejected the sciences, but persecuted the professors. Had Newton or Descartes lived three or four hundred years ago, and pursued their studies as they did, it is most probable they would not have lived to finish them; and had Franklin drawn lightning from the clouds at the same time, it would have been at the hazard of expiring for it in flames.

Later times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals; but, however unwilling the partisans of the Christian system may be to believe or to acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system. There was more knowledge in the world before that period, than for many centuries afterwards; and as to religious knowledge, the Christian system, as already said, was only another species of mythology; and the mythology to which it succeeded, was a corruption of an ancient system of theism.*

It is owing to this long interregnum of science, *and to no other cause*, that we have now to look through a vast chasm of many hundred years to the respectable characters

*It is impossible for us now to know at what time the heathen mythology began; but it is certain, from the internal evidence that it carries, that it did not begin in the same state or condition in which it ended. All the gods of that mythology, except Saturn, were of modern invention. The supposed reign of Saturn was prior to that which is called the heathen mythology, and was so far a species of theism, that it admitted the belief of only one God. Saturn is supposed to have abdicated the government in favor of his three sons and one daughter, Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune, and Juno; after this, thousands of other gods and demigods were imaginarily created, and the calendar of gods increased as fast as the calendar of saints and the calendars of courts have increased since.

All the corruptions that have taken place, in theology and in religion, have been produced by admitting of what man calls *revealed religion*. The Mythologists pretended to more revealed religion than the Christians do. They had their oracles and their priests, who were supposed to receive and deliver the word of God verbally, on almost all occasions.

Since then all corruptions down from Moloch to modern predestinarianism, and the human sacrifices of the heathens to the Christian sacrifice of the Creator, have been produced by admitting of what is called *revealed religion*; the most effectual means to prevent all such evils and impositions is, not to admit of any other revelation than that which is manifested in the book of creation, and to contemplate the creation as the only true and real work of God that ever did, or ever will exist; and that everything else called the word of God, is fable and imposition.

we call the ancients. Had the progression of knowledge gone on proportionably with the stock that before existed, that chasm would have been filled up with characters rising superior in knowledge to each other; and those ancients we now so much admire, would have appeared respectably in the background of the scene. But the Christian system laid all waste; and if we take our stand about the beginning of the sixteenth century, we look back through that long chasm, to the times of the ancients, as over a vast sandy desert, in which not a shrub appears to intercept the vision, to the fertile hills beyond.

It is an inconsistency scarcely possible to be credited, that any thing should exist, under the name of a religion, that held it to be *irreligious* to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God had made. But the fact is too well established to be denied. The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic ignorance, is that known by the name of the Reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear. This was the only public good the Reformation did; for, with respect to religious good, it might as well not have taken place. The mythology still continued the same; and a multiplicity of National Popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom.

Having thus shown from the internal evidence of things, the cause that produced a change in the state of learning, and the motive for substituting the study of dead languages, in the place of the sciences, I proceed, in addition to the several observations, already made in the former part of this work, to compare, or rather to confront the evidence that the structure of the universe affords, with the Christian system of religion; but, as I cannot begin this part better than by referring to the ideas that occurred to me at an early part of life, and which I doubt not have occurred in some degree to almost every other person at one time or other, I shall state what those ideas were, and add thereto such other matter as shall arise out of the subject, giving to the whole, by way of preface, a short introduction.

My father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good

fortune to have an exceeding good moral education, and a tolerable stock of useful learning. Though I went to the grammar school,* I did not learn Latin, not only because I had no inclination to learn languages, but because of the objection the Quakers have against the books in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent me from being acquainted with the subjects of all the Latin books used in the school.

The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn, and I believe some talent for poetry ; but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as leading too much into the field of imagination. As soon as I was able, I purchased a pair of globes, and attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became afterwards acquainted with Dr. Bevis, of the society, called the Royal Society, then living in the Temple, and an excellent astronomer.

I had no disposition for what is called politics. It presented to my mind no other idea than is contained in the word Jockeyship. When, therefore, I turned my thoughts towards matters of government, I had to form a system for myself, that accorded with the moral and philosophic principles in which I had been educated. I saw, or at least I thought I saw, a vast scene opening itself to the world in the affairs of America ; and it appeared to me, that unless the Americans changed the plan they were then pursuing, with respect to the government of England, and declared themselves independent, they would not only involve themselves in a multiplicity of new difficulties, but shut out the prospect that was then offering itself to mankind through their means. It was from these motives that I published the work known by the name of "*Common Sense*," which is the first work I ever did publish ; and so far as I can judge of myself, I believe I should never have been known in the world as an author, on any subject whatever, had it not been for the affairs of America. I wrote "*Common Sense*" the latter end of the year 1775, and published it the first of January, 1776. Independence was declared the fourth of July following.

Any person, who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own,

*The same school, Thetford in Norfolk, that the present Counselor Mingay went, to and under the same master.

cannot but have observed, that there are two distinct classes of what are called Thoughts; those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining; and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have. As to the learning that any person gains from school education, it serves only like a small capital, to put him in the way of beginning learning for himself afterwards. Every person of learning is finally his own teacher, the reason of which is, that principles, being of a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory; their place of mental residence is the understanding, and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception. Thus much for the introductory part.

From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was; but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the Son of God.* After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of that kind of thoughts that had anything in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had, that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner at this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were

ashamed to tell their children any thing about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence; for the Christian Mythology has five deities—there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it, (for that is the plain language of the story,) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better, is making the story still worse; as if mankind could be improved by the example of murder; and to tell him that all this is a mystery, is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.

How different is this to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true Deist has but one Deity; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavoring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientifical and mechanical.

The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true Deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers: but they have contracted themselves too much, by leaving the works of God out of their system. Though I reverence their philanthropy, I can not help smiling at the conceit, that if the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation what a silent and drab-colored creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gaities, nor a bird been permitted to sing.

Quitting these reflections, I proceed to other matters. After I had made myself master of the use of the globes, and of the orrery,* and conceived an idea of the infinity of space, and the eternal divisability of matter, and obtained, at least, a general knowledge of what was called natural philosophy, I began to compare, or, as I have before said,

* As this book may fall into the hands of persons who do not know what an orrery is, it is for their information I add this note, as the name gives no idea of the uses of the thing. The orrery has its name from the person who invented it. It is a machinery of clock-work, representing the universe in miniature, and in which the revolution of the earth round itself and round the sun, the revolution of the moon round the earth, the revolution of the planets round the sun, their relative distances from the sun, as the centre of the whole system, their relative distances from each other, and their different magnitudes, are represented as they really exist in what we call the heavens.

to confront the eternal evidence those things afford with the Christian system of faith.

Though it is not a direct article of the Christian system, that this world that we inhabit is the whole of the habitable creation, yet it is so worked up therewith, from what is called the Mosaic account of the Creation, the story of Eve and the apple, and the counterpart of that story, the death of the Son of God, that to believe otherwise, that is, to believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks that he believes both, has thought but little of either.

Though the belief of a plurality of worlds was familiar to the ancients, it is only within the last three centuries that the extent and dimensions of this globe that we inhabit have been ascertained. Several vessels, following the tract of the ocean, have sailed entirely round the world, as a man may march in a circle, and come round by the contrary side of the circle to the spot he set out from. The circular dimensions of our world, in the widest part, as a man would measure the widest round of an apple, or a ball, is only twenty-five thousand and twenty English miles, reckoning sixty-nine miles and a half to an equatorial degree, and may be sailed round in the space of about three years.*

A world of this extent may, at first thought, appear to us to be great; but if we compare it with the immensity of space in which it is suspended, like a bubble or balloon in the air, it is infinitely less, in proportion, than the smallest grain of sand is to the size of the world, or the finest particle of dew to the whole ocean, and is therefore but small; and, as will be hereafter shown, is only one of a system of worlds, of which the universal creation is composed.

It is not difficult to gain some faint idea of the immensity of space in which this and all the other worlds are suspended, if we follow a progression of ideas. When we think of the size or dimensions of a room, our ideas limit themselves to the walls, and there they stop; but when our eye or our imagination darts into space, that is, when it looks upwards

*Allowing a ship to sail, on an average, three miles in an hour, she would sail entirely round the world in less than one year, if she could sail in a direct circle; but she is obliged to follow the course of the ocean.

into what we call the open air, we cannot conceive any walls or boundaries it can have; and if for the sake of resting our ideas, we suppose a boundary, the question immediately renews itself, and asks, what is beyond that boundary? and in the same manner, what beyond the next boundary? and so on till the fatigued imagination returns and says, *there is no end.* Certainly, then, the Creator was not pent for room, when he made this world no larger than it is; and we have to seek the reason in something else.

If we take a survey of our own world, or rather of this of which the Creator has given us the use, as our portion in the immense system of Creation, we find every part of it, the earth, the waters, and the air that surrounds it, filled, and, as it were, crowded with life, down from the largest animals we know of to the smallest insects the naked eye can behold, and from thence to others still smaller, and totally invisible without the assistance of the microscope. Every tree, every plant, every leaf, serves not only as an habitation, but as a world to some numerous race, till animal existence becomes so exceedingly refined, that the effluvia of a blade of grass would be food for thousands.

Since, then, no part of our earth is left unoccupied, why is it to be supposed that the immensity of space is a naked void, lying in eternal waste? There is room for millions of worlds as large or larger than ours, and each of them millions of miles apart from each other.

Having now arrived at this point, if we carry our ideas only one thought further, we shall see, perhaps, the true reason, at least a very good reason, for our happiness, why the Creator, instead of making one immense world, extending over an immense quantity of space, has preferred dividing that quantity of matter into several distinct and separate worlds, which we call planets, of which our earth is one. But before I explain my ideas upon this subject, it is necessary (not for the sake of those who already know, but for those who do not) to show what the system of the universe is.

That part of the universe that is called the solar system (meaning the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, and of which Sol, or in English language, the Sun, is the center) consists, besides the Sun, of six distinct orbs, or planets, or worlds, besides the secondary bodies, called the

satellites or moons of which our earth has one that attends her in her annual revolution round the Sun, in like manner as other satellites or moons, attend the planets or worlds to which they severally belong, as may be seen by the assistance of the telescope.

The Sun is the center, round which those six worlds or planets revolve at different distances therefrom, and in circles concentrate to each other. Each world keeps constantly in nearly the same track round the Sun, and continues, at the same time, turning round itself, in nearly an upright position, as a top turns round itself when it is spinning on the ground, and leans a little sideways.

It is this leaning of the earth (23½ degrees) that occasions summer and winter, and the different length of days and nights. If the earth turned round itself in a position perpendicular to the plane or level of the circle it moves in around the Sun, as a top turns round when it stands erect on the ground, the days and nights would be always of the same length—twelve hours day and twelve hours night—and the seasons would be uniformly the same throughout the year.

Every time that a planet (our earth, for example) turns round itself, it makes what we call day and night; and every time it goes entirely round the Sun, it makes what we call a year; consequently our world turns three hundred and sixty-five times round itself in going once round the Sun.*

The names that the ancients gave to those six worlds, and which are still called by the same names, are Mercury, Venus, this world that we call ours, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. They appear larger to the eye than the stars, being many million miles nearer to our earth than any of the stars are. The planet Venus is that which is called the evening star, and sometimes the morning star, as she happens to set after or rise before the Sun, which, in either case, is never more than three hours.

The Sun, as before said, being the centre, the planet, or world, nearest the Sun is Mercury; his distance from the Sun is thirty-four million miles, and he moves round in a circles always at that distance from the Sun, as a top may

*Those who supposed that the Sun went round the earth every twenty-four hours made the same mistake, in idea, that a cook would do in fact that should make the fire go round the meat, instead of the meat turning round itself towards the fire.

be supposed to spin round in the track in which a horse goes in a mill. The second world is Venus; she is fifty-seven million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle much greater than that of Mercury. The third world is that we inhabit, and which is eighty-eight million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Venus. The fourth world is Mars; he is distant from the Sun one hundred and thirty-four million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of our earth. The fifth is Jupiter; he is distant from the sun five hundred and fifty-seven million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Mars. The sixth world is Saturn; he is distant from the Sun seven hundred and sixty-three million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle that surrounds the circles, or orbits, of all the other worlds or planets.

The space, therefore, in the air, or in the immensity of space, that our solar system takes up for the several worlds to perform their revolutions in round the Sun, is of the extent, in a straight line, of the whole diameter of the orbit or circle in which Saturn moves round the Sun, which, being double his distance from the Sun, is fifteen hundred and twenty-six million miles, and its circular extent is nearly five thousand million; and its globical content is almost three thousand five hundred million times three thousand five hundred million square miles.*

But this, immense as it is, is only one system of worlds. Beyond this, at a vast distance into space, far beyond all power of calculation, are the stars called the fixed stars. They are called fixed because they have no revolutionary motion, as the six worlds or planets have that I have been

*If it should be asked, how can man know these things? I have one plain answer to give, which is that man knows how to calculate an eclipse, and also how to calculate to a minute of time when the planet Venus, in making her revolutions round the Sun, will come in a straight line between our earth and the Sun, and will appear to us about the size of a large pea passing across the surface of the Sun. This happens but twice in about an hundred years, at the distance of about eight years from each other, and has happened twice in our time, both of which were foreknown by calculation. It can also be known when they will happen again for a thousand years to come, or to any other portion of time. As, therefore, man could not be able to do these things if he did not understand the solar system, and the manner in which the revolutions of the several planets or worlds are performed, the fact of calculating an eclipse or a transit of Venus is a proof in point that the knowledge exists; and, as to a few thousand, or even a few million, miles, more or less, it makes scarcely any sensible difference in such immense distances.

describing. Those fixed stars continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the Sun does, in the center of our system. The probability, therefore, is that each of those fixed stars is also a Sun, round which another system of worlds or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central Sun.

By this easy progression of ideas the immensity of space will appear to us to be filled with systems of worlds; and that no part of space lies at waste, any more than any part of the globe or earth and water is left unoccupied.

Having thus endeavored to convey, in a familiar and easy manner, some idea of the structure of the universe, I return to explain what I before alluded to, namely, the great benefits arising to man in consequence of the Creator having made a *plurality* of worlds, such as our system is, consisting of a central Sun and six worlds besides satellites, in preference to that of creating one world only of a vast extent.

It is an idea I have never lost sight of, that all our knowledge of science is derived from the revolutions (exhibited to our eye and from thence to our understanding) which those several planets or worlds, of which our system is composed, make in their circuit round the Sun.

Had then the quantity of matter which these six worlds contain been blended into one solitary globe, the consequence to us would have been, that either no revolutionary motion would have existed, or not a sufficiency of it to give us the idea and the knowledge of science we now have; and it is from the sciences that all the mechanical arts that contribute so much to our earthly felicity and comfort, are derived.

As, therefore, the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that He organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man; and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe, formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying, if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe—we can discover at least one reason why a *plurality* of worlds has been made, and that reason calls forth the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration.

But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that the benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds of which our system is composed, enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other; and, therefore, the same universal school of science presents itself to all.

Neither does the knowledge stop here. The system of worlds next to us exhibits, in its revolutions, the same principles and school of science, to the inhabitants of their system, as our system does to us, and in like manner throughout the immensity of space.

Our ideas, not only of the almightiness of the Creator, but of his wisdom and his beneficence, become enlarged in proportion as we contemplate the extent and the structure of the universe. The solitary idea of a solitary world, rolling or at rest in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds, so happily contrived as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man. We see our own earth filled with abundance; but we forget to consider how much of that abundance is owing to the scientific knowledge the vast machinery of the universe has unfolded.

But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shown, than twenty-five thousand miles? An extent which a man, walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the almighty power of the Creator.

From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit, that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because they say one man and one woman had eaten an apple! And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself,

would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.

It has been by rejecting the evidence, that the word or works of God in the creation afford to our senses, and the action of our reason upon that evidence, that so many wild and whimsical systems of faith, and of religion, have been fabricated and set up. There may be many systems of religion, that so far from being morally bad, are in many respects morally good: but there can be but ONE that is true; and that one necessarily must, as it ever will, be in all things consistent with the ever-existing word of God that we behold in his works. But such is the strange construction of the Christian system of faith, that every evidence the Heavens afford to man, either directly contradicts it, or renders it absurd.

It is possible to believe, and I always feel pleasure in encouraging myself to believe it, that there have been men in the world, who persuade themselves that, what is called a *pious fraud*, might, at least under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But the fraud being once established, could not afterwards be explained; for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

The persons who first preached the Christian system of faith, and in some measure combined it with the morality preached by Jesus Christ, might persuade themselves that it was better than the heathen mythology that then prevailed. From the first preachers the fraud went on to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief became again encouraged by the interests of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.

But though such a belief might, by such means, be rendered almost general among the laity, it is next to impossible to account for the continual persecution carried on by the church, for several hundred years, against the sciences, and against the professors of sciences, if the church had not some record or tradition, that it was originally no other than a pious fraud, or did not foresee, that it could not be maintained against the evidence that the structure of the universe afforded.

Having thus shown the irreconcilable inconsistencies between the real word of God existing in the universe and that which is called *the word of God*, as shown to us in a printed book that any man might make, I proceed to speak of the three principal means that have been employed in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, to impose upon mankind.

These three means are Mystery, Miracle, and Prophecy. The two first are incompatible with true religion, and the third ought always to be suspected.

With respect to mystery, every thing we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develop itself, and become an oak. We know not how it is that the seed we sow unfolds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it; and we know also the means we are to use, which is no other than putting seed in the ground. We know, therefore, as much as is necessary for us to know; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which if we did, we could not perform, the Creator takes upon himself and performs it for us. We are, therefore, better off than if we had been let into the secret, and left to do it for ourselves.

But though every created thing is, in this sense, a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth*, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelops *itself* in mystery; and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped, is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.

Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God, and the practice of moral truth, cannot have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having anything of mystery in it is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practice of moral truth, or, in other words, a practical imita-

tion of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting toward each other as he acts benignly toward all. We cannot *serve* God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service; and, therefore, the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a recluse life in selfish devotion.

The very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove even to demonstration, that it must be free from every thing of mystery, and unincumbered with everything that is mysterious. Religion, considered as a duty, is incumbent upon every living soul alike, and, therefore, must be on a level to the understanding and comprehension of all. Man does not learn religion as he learns the secrets and mysteries of a trade. He learns the theory of religion by reflection. It arises out of the action of his own mind upon the things which he sees, or upon what he may happen to hear or to read, and the practice joins itself thereto.

When men, whether from policy or pious fraud, set up systems of religion incompatible with the word or works of God in the creation, and not only above, but repugnant to human comprehension, they were under the necessity of inventing or adopting a word that should serve as a bar to all questions, inquiries and speculations. The word *mystery* answered this purpose; and thus it has happened that religion, which is in itself without mystery, has been corrupted into a fog of mysteries.

As *mystery* answered all general purposes, *miracle* followed as an occasional auxiliary. The former served to bewilder the mind; the latter to puzzle the senses. The one was the lingo, the other the legerdemain.

But before going further into this subject, it will be proper to inquire what is to be understood by a miracle.

In the same sense that everything may be said to be a mystery, so also may it be said that everything is a miracle, and that no one thing is a greater miracle than another. The elephant, though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite; nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an almighty power, it is no more difficult to make the one than the other; and no more difficult to make a million of

worlds than to make one. Everything, therefore, is a miracle in one sense, whilst in the other sense, there is no such thing as a miracle. It is a miracle when compared to our power, and to our comprehension; it is not a miracle compared to the power that performs it; but as nothing in this description conveys the idea that is affixed to the word miracle, it is necessary to carry the inquiry further.

Mankind have conceived to themselves certain laws, by which what they call nature is supposed to act, and that a miracle is something contrary to the operation and effect of those laws, but unless we know the whole extent of those laws, and of what are commonly called the powers of nature, we are not able to judge whether anything that may appear to us wonderful or miraculous, be within, or be beyond, or be contrary to, her natural power of acting.

The ascension of a man several miles high into the air, would have everything in it that constitutes the idea of a miracle, if it were not known that a species of air can be generated several times lighter than the common atmospheric air, and yet possess elasticity enough to prevent the balloon, in which that light air is enclosed, from being compressed into as many times less bulk, by the common air that surrounds it. In like manner, extracting flames or sparks of fire from the human body, as visible as from a steel struck with a flint, and causing iron or steel to move without any visible agent, would also give the idea of a miracle, if we were not acquainted with electricity and magnetism; so also would many other experiments in natural philosophy, to those who are not acquainted with the subject. The restoring persons to life, who are to appearance dead, as is practiced upon drowned persons, would also be a miracle, if it were not known that animation is capable of being suspended without being extinct.

Besides these, there are performances by slight-of-hand, and by persons acting in concert, that have a miraculous appearance, which, when known, are thought nothing of. And, besides these, there are mechanical and optical deceptions. There is now an exhibition in Paris of ghosts or spectres, which, though it is not imposed upon the spectators as a fact, has an astonishing appearance. As, therefore, we know not the extent to which either nature or art can go, there is no criterion to determine what a miracle is; and

mankind, in giving credit to appearance, under the idea of there being miracles, are subject to be continually imposed upon.

Since then appearances are so capable of deceiving, and things not real have a strong resemblance to things that are, nothing can be more inconsistent than to suppose that the Almighty would make use of means, such as are called miracles, that would subject the person who performed them to the suspicion of being an imposter, and the person who related them to be suspected of lying, and the doctrine intended to be supported thereby to be suspected as a fabulous invention.

Of all the modes of evidence that ever were intended to obtain belief to any system or opinion to which the name of religion has been given, that of miracle, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show, for the purpose of procuring that belief, (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show,) it implies a lameness or wickedness in the doctrine that is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a showman, playing tricks to amuse and make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence that can be set up, for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter who says that he saw it; and, therefore, the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.

Suppose I were to say that, when I sat down to write this book, a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen and wrote every word that is herein written; would anybody believe me? Certainly they would not. Would they believe me a whit the more if the thing had been a fact? Certainly they would not. Since, then, a real miracle, were it to happen, would be subject to the same fate as the falsehood, the inconsistency becomes the greater of supposing the Almighty would make use of means that would not answer the purpose for which they were intended, even if they were real.

If we are to suppose a miracle to be something so entirely out of the course of what is called nature that she must go out of that course to accomplish it, and we see an account

given of such miracle by the person who said he saw it, it raises a question in the mind very easily decided, which is, is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie? We have never seen, in our time, nature go out of her course; but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time. It is, therefore, at least millions to one that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie.

The story of the whale swallowing Jonah, though a whale is large enough to do it, borders greatly on the marvelous; but it would have approached nearer to the idea of miracle if Jonah had swallowed the whale. In this, which may serve for all cases of miracles, the matter would decide itself, as before stated—namely, is it more probable that a man should have swallowed a whale or told a lie?

But suppose that Jonah had really swallowed the whale, and gone with it in his belly to Nineveh, and, to convince the people that it was true, have cast it up in their sight, of the full length and size of a whale, would they not have believed him to have been the devil, instead of a prophet? or, if the whale had carried Jonah to Nineveh, and cast him up in the same public manner, would they not have believed the whale to have been the devil, and Jonah one of his imps?

The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain, and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and showing him and promising to him *all the kingdoms of the world.* How happened it that he did not discover America? or, is it only with *kingdoms* that his sooty highness has any interest?

I have too much respect for the moral character of Christ to believe that he told this whale of a miracle himself; neither is it easy to account for what purpose it could have been fabricated, unless it were to impose upon the connoisseurs of miracles, as is sometimes practiced upon the connoisseurs of Queen Anne's farthings, and collectors of relics and antiquities; or, to render the belief of miracles ridiculous by outdoing miracles, as Don Quixote outdid chivalry; or, to embarrass the belief of miracles, by making it doubtful by what power, whether of God or the devil, any-

thing called a miracle was performed. It requires, however, a great deal of faith in the devil to believe this miracle.

In every point of view in which those things called miracles can be placed and considered, the reality of them is improbable, and their existence unnecessary. They would not, as before observed, answer any useful purpose, even if they were true, for it is more difficult to obtain belief to a miracle than to a principle evidently moral, without any miracle. Moral principle speaks universally for itself. Miracle could be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few. After this, it requires a transfer of faith from God to man to believe a miracle upon man's report. Instead, therefore, of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous. It is necessary to the full and upright character of truth that it rejects the crutch; and it is consistent with the character of fable to seek the aid that truth rejects. Thus much for mystery and miracle.

As mystery and miracle took charge of the past and the present, prophecy took charge of the future, and rounded the tenses of faith. It was not sufficient to know what had been done, but what would be done. The supposed prophet was the supposed historian of times to come; and if he happened in shooting with a long bow of a thousand years, to strike within a thousand miles of a mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it point blank; and if he happened to be directly wrong, it was only to suppose, as in the case of Jonah and Nineveh, that God had repented himself and changed his mind. What a fool do fabulous systems make of man!

It has been shown, in a former part of this work, that the original meaning of the words *prophet and prophesying* has been changed, and that a prophet, in the sense of the word as now used, is a creature of modern invention; and it is owing to this change in the meaning of the words, that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets, and phrases and expressions now rendered obscure by our not being acquainted with the local circumstances to which they applied at the time they were used, have been erected into prophecies, and made to bend to explanations, at the will

and whimsical conceits of sectaries, expounders and commentators. Everything unintelligible was prophetical, and everything insignificant was typical. A blunder would have served as a prophecy, and a dish-clout for a type.

If by a prophet we are to suppose a man to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in future, either there were such men, or there were not. If there were, it is consistent to believe that the event so communicated would be told in terms that could be understood, and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehensions of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that might happen afterwards. It is conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty to suppose he would deal in this jesting manner with mankind; yet all the things called prophecies in the book called the Bible come under this description.

But it is with prophecy as it is with miracle: it could not answer the purpose, even if it were real. Those to whom a prophecy should be told could not tell whether the man prophesied or lied, or whether it had been revealed to him, or whether he conceited it; and, if the thing that he prophesied, or intended to prophesy, should happen, or something like it, among the multitude of things that are daily happening, nobody could again know whether he foreknew it or guessed at it, or whether it was accidental. A prophet, therefore, is a character useless and unnecessary; and the safe side of the case is to guard against being imposed upon, by not giving credit to such relations.

Upon the whole, mystery, miracle and prophecy are appendages that belong to fabulous, and not to true religion. They are the means by which so many *Lo heres!* and *Lo theres!* have been spread about the world, and religion been made into a trade. The success of one imposter gave encouragement to another, and the quieting salvo of doing *some good* by keeping up a *pious fraud* protected them from remorse.

Having now extended the subject to a greater length than I first intended, I shall bring it to a close by abstracting a summary from the whole.

First—That the idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself,

for reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of an universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world.

Secondly—That the Creation we behold is the real and ever-existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived. It proclaims his power, it demonstrates his wisdom, it manifests his goodness and beneficence.

Thirdly—That the moral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God manifested in the creation towards all his creatures; that, seeing, as we daily do, the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practice the same towards each other; and, consequently, that everything of persecution and revenge between man and man, and everything of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty.

I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.

It is certain that, in one point, all nations of the earth and all religions agree: all believe in a God. The things in which they disagree are the redundancies annexed to that belief; and, therefore, if ever a universal religion should prevail, it will not be believing anything new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there was such a man, was created a Deist; but, in the meantime, let every man follow, as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers.

PREFACE.

I have mentioned in the former part of *The Age of Reason*, that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion; but that I had originally reserved it to a later period in life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake. The circumstances, however, which existed in France in the later end of the year 1793, determined me to delay it no longer. The just and humane principles of the revolution which philosophy had first diffused, had been departed from. The idea, always dangerous to society as it is derogatory to the Almighty, that priests could forgive sins, though it seemed to exist no longer, had blunted the feelings of humanity, and prepared men for the commission of all manner of crimes. The intolerant spirit of church persecutions had transferred itself into politics; the tribunal, styled revolutionary, supplied the place of an inquisition; and the guillotine and the stake outdid the fire and the faggot of the church. I saw many of my most intimate friends destroyed; others daily carried to prison; and I had reason to believe, and had also intimations given me, that the same danger was approaching myself.

Under these disadvantages, I began the former part of the *Age of Reason*; I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any; notwithstanding which I have produced a work that no Bible-believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of church books about him, can refute. Towards the latter end of December of that year, a motion was made and carried, to exclude foreigners from the convention. There were but two in it, Anacharsis Cloots and myself; and I saw I was particularly pointed at by Bourdon de l'Oise, in his speech on that motion.

Conceiving, after this, that I had but a few days of lib-

erty, I sat down and brought the work to a close as speedily as possible; and I had not finished it more than six hours, in the state it has since appeared, before a guard came there about three in the morning, with an order signed by the two committees of public safety and Surety-General, for putting me in arrestation as a foreigner, and conveyed me to the prison of the Luxembourg. I contrived, in my way there, to call on Joel Barlow, and I put the manuscript of the work into his hands, as more safe than in my possession in prison; and not knowing what might be the fate in France either of the writer or the work, I addressed it to the protection of the citizens of the United States.

It is with justice that I say that the guard who executed this order, and the interpreter of the Committee of General Surety, who accompanied them to examine my papers, treated me not only with civility, but with respect. The keeper of the Luxembourg, Bennoit, a man of good heart, showed to me every friendship in his power, as did also his family, while he continued in that station. He was removed from it, put into arrestation, and carried before the tribunal upon a malignant accusation, but acquitted.

After I had been in the Luxembourg about three weeks, the Americans, then in Paris, went in a body to the convention, to reclaim me as their countryman and friend; but were answered by the President, Vader, who was also President of the Committee of Surety-General, and had signed the order for my arrestation, that I was born in England. I heard no more, after this, from any person out of the walls of the prison, till the fall of Robespierre, on the 9th of Thermidor —July 27, 1794.

About two months before this event, I was seized with a fever, that in its progress had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely on having written the former part of *The Age of Reason*. I had then but little expectation of surviving, and those about me had less. I know, therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my own principles.

I was then with three chamber comrades, Joseph Vanheule, of Bruges, Charles Bastini, and Michael Rubyns, of Louvain. The unceasing and anxious attention of these

three friends to me by night and by day, I remember with gratitude, and mention with pleasure. It happened that a physician (Dr. Graham) and a surgeon, (Mr. Bond,) part of the suite of General O'Hara, were then in the Luxembourg. I ask not myself, whether it be convenient to them, as men under the English government, That I express to them my thanks; but I should reproach myself if I did not; and also to the physician of the Luxembourg, Dr. Markoski.

I have some reason to believe, because I cannot discover any other cause, that this illness preserved me in existence. Among the papers of Robespierre that were examined and reported upon to the Convention, by a Committee of Deputies, is a note in the hand-writing of Robespierre, in the following words:

"Demander que Thomas Paine soit decrete d'accusation, pour l'interet de l'Amerique autant que de la France."	To demand that a decree of accusation be passed against Thomas Paine for the interest of America, as well as of France.

From what cause it was that the intention was not put in execution, I know not and cannot inform myself; and therefore I ascribe it to impossibility, on account of that illness.

The Convention, to repair as much as lay in their power the injustice I had sustained, invited me publicly and unanimously to return into the Convention, and which I accepted, to show that I could bear an injury without permitting it to injure my principles or my disposition. It is not because right principles have been violated, that they are to be abandoned.

I have seen, since I have been at liberty, several publications written, some in America, and some in England, as answers to the former part of "The Age of Reason." If the authors of these can amuse themselves by so doing, I shall not interrupt them. They may write against the work, and against me, as much as they please; they do me more service than they intend, and I can have no objection that they write on. They will find, however, by this second part, without its being written as an answer to them, that they must return to their work, and spin their cobweb over again. The first is brushed away by accident.

They will now find that I have furnished myself with a Bible and a Testament; and I can say also that I have found

them to be much worse books than I had conceived. If I have erred in anything, in the former part of "The Age of Reason," it has been by speaking better of some parts of those books than they have deserved.

I observe that all my opponents resort, more or less, to what they call Scripture Evidence and Bible authority, to help them out. They are so little masters of the subject, as to confound a dispute about authenticity with a dispute about doctrines; I will, however, put them right, that if they should be disposed to write any more, they may know how to begin.

THOMAS PAINE.

October, 1796.

THE AGE OF REASON.

PART SECOND.

It has often been said, that anything may be proved from the Bible, but before anything can be admitted as proved by the Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true; for if the Bible be not true, or the truth of it be doubtful, it ceases to have authority, and cannot be admitted as proof of anything.

It has been the practice of all Christian commentators on the Bible, and of all Christian priests and preachers, to impose the Bible on the world as a mass of truth, and as the word of God; they have disputed and wrangled and anathematized each other about the supposable meaning of particular parts and passages therein; one has said and insisted that such a passage meant such a thing; another that it meant directly the contrary; and a third, that it means neither one nor the other, but something different from both; and this they call *understanding* the Bible.

It has happened, that all the answers which I have seen to the former part of the *Age of Reason* have been written by priests; and these pious men like their predecessors, contend and wrangle, and pretend to *understand* the Bible; each understands it differently, but each understands it best; and they have agreed in nothing, but in telling their readers that Thomas Paine understands it not.

Now instead of wasting their time, and heating themselves in fractious disputations about doctrinal points drawn from the Bible, these men ought to know, and if they do not, it is civility to inform them, that the first thing to be understood is, whether there is sufficient authority for believing the Bible to be the word of God, or whether there is not.

There are matters in that book, said to be done by the

express command of God, that are as shocking to humanity, and to every idea we have of moral justice, as anything done by Robespierre, by Carrier, by Joseph le Bon, in France, by the English government in the East Indies, or by any other assassin in modern times. When we read in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, etc., that they (the Israelites) came by stealth upon whole nations of people, who, as the history itself shows, had given them no offense ; *that they put all those nations to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy ; that they utterly destroyed men, women and children ; that they left not a soul to breathe;* expressions that are repeated over and over again in those books, and that too with exulting ferocity ; are we sure these things are facts? Are we sure that the Creator of man commissioned these things to be done? Are we sure that the books that tell us so were written by his authority?

It is not the antiquity of a tale that is any evidence of its truth ; on the contrary, it is a symptom of its being fabulous ; for the more ancient any history pretends to be, the more it has the resemblance of a fable. The origin of every nation is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other. To charge the commission of acts upon the Almighty, which in their own nature, and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes as all assassination is, and more especially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern. The Bible tells us, that those assassinations were done by the *express command of God.* To believe, therefore, the Bible to be true, we must *unbelieve* all our belief in the moral justice of God ; for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo everything that is tender, sympathizing, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible was fabulous, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice.

But in addition to all the moral evidence against the Bible, I will in the progress of this work produce such other evidence, as even a priest cannot deny ; and show, from that evidence, that the Bible is not entitled to credit, as being the word of God.

But, before I proceed to this examination, I will show

wherein the Bible differs from all other ancient writings with respect to the nature of the evidence necessary to establish its authenticity; and this is more proper to be done, because the advocates of the Bible, in their answers to the former part of the *Age of Reason*, undertake to say, and they put some stress thereon, that the authenticity of the Bible is as well established as that of any other ancient book; as if our belief of the one could become any rule for our belief of the other.

I know, however, but of one ancient book that authoritatively challenges universal consent and belief, and that is *Euclid's Elements of Geometry;** and the reason is, because it is a book of self-evident demonstration, entirely independent of its author, and of everything relating to time, place and circumstance. The matters contained in that book would have the same authority they now have, had they been written by any other person, or had the work been anonymous, or had the author never been known; for the identical certainty of who was the author, makes no part of our belief of the matters contained in the book. But it is quite otherwise with respect to books ascribed to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel, &c. Those are books of *testimony*, and they testify of things naturally incredible; and, therefore, the whole of our belief, as to the authenticity of those books, rests, in the first place, upon the *certainty* that they were written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; secondly, upon the credit we give to their testimony. We may believe the first, that is, we may believe the certainty of the authorship, and yet not the testimony, in the same manner that we may believe that a certain person gave evidence upon a case and yet not believe the evidence that he gave. But if it should be found, that the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, were not written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, every part of the authority and authenticity of those books is gone at once; for there can be no such thing as forged or invented testimony; neither can there be anonymous testimony, more especially as to things naturally incredible, such as that of talking with God face to face, or that of the sun and moon standing still at the

* Euclid, according to chronological history, lived three hundred years before Christ, and about one hundred before Archimedes; he was of the city of Alexandria, in Egypt.

command of a man. The greater part of the other ancient books are works of genius ; of which kind are those ascribed to Homer, to Plato, to Aristotle, to Demosthenes, to Cicero, &c. Here again the author is not essential in the credit we give to any of those works ; for, as works of genius, they would have the same merit they have now, were they anonymous. Nobody believes the Trojan story, as related by Homer, to be true, for it is the poet only that is admired ; and the merit of the poet will remain, though the story be fabulous. But, if we disbelieve the matters related by the Bible authors, (Moses for instance,) as we disbelieve the things related by Homer, there remains nothing of Moses, in our estimation, but an imposter. As to the ancient historians, from Herodotus to Tacitus, we credit them as far as they relate things probable and credible, and no further ; for, if we do, we must believe the two miracles which Tacitus relates were performed by Vespasian—that of curing a lame man, and a blind man, in just the same manner as the same things are told of Jesus Christ by his historians. We must also believe the miracles cited by Josephus—that of the sea of Pamphilia opening to let Alexander and his army pass, as is related of the Red Sea in Exodus. These miracles are quite as well authenticated as the Bible miracles, and yet we do not believe them ; consequently the degree of evidence necessary to establish our belief of things naturally incredible, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, is far greater than that which obtains our belief to natural and probable things ; and, therefore, the advocates for the Bible have no claim to our belief of the Bible, because that we believe things stated in other ancient writings; since we believe the things stated in these writings no further than they are probable and credible, or because they are self-evident, like Euclid ; or admire them because they are elegant, like Homer ; or approve them because they are sedate, like Plato ; or judicious, like Aristotle.

Having premised these things, I proceed to examine the authenticity of the Bible, and I begin with what are called the five books of Moses, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*. My intention is to show that those books are spurious, and that Moses is not the author of them ; and still further, that they were not written in the time of Moses, nor till several hundred years afterwards ;

that they are no other than an attempted history of the life of Moses, and of the times in which he is said to have lived, and also of the times prior thereto, written by some very ignorant and stupid pretenders to authorship, several hundred years after the death of Moses, as men now write histories of things that happened, or are supposed to have happened, several hundred or several thousand years ago.

The evidence that I shall produce in this case is from the books themselves, and I will confine myself to this evidence only. Were I to refer for proof to any of the ancient authors whom the advocates of the Bible call profane authors, they would controvert that authority as I controvert theirs; I will, therefore, meet them on their own ground, and oppose them with their own weapon, the Bible.

In the first place, there is no affirmative evidence that Moses is the author of those books; and that he is the author is altogether an unfounded opinion, got abroad nobody knows how. The style and manner in which those books are written give no room to believe, or even to suppose, they were written by Moses; for it is altogether the style and manner of another person speaking of Moses. In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, (for everything in Genesis is prior to the times of Moses, and not the least allusion is made to him therein,) the whole, I say, of these books is in the third person; it is always, *the Lord said unto Moses*, or *Moses said unto the Lord;* or *Moses said unto the people*, or *the people said unto Moses;* and this is the style and manner that historians use in speaking of the person whose lives and actions they are writing. It may be said that a man may speak of himself in the third person, and, therefore, it may be supposed that Moses did; but supposition proves nothing, and, if the advocates for the belief that Moses wrote those books himself have nothing better to advance than supposition, they may as well be silent.

But, granting the grammatical right that Moses might speak of himself in the third person, because any man might speak of himself in that manner, it cannot be admitted as a fact in those books that it is Moses who speaks without rendering Moses truly ridiculous and absurd. For example, Numbers, chap. xii., ver. 3: "*Now the man Moses was very meek, above all men which were on the face of the earth.*" If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the meekest

of men he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs; and the advocates for those books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them; if Moses was not the author, the books are without authority; and if he was the author, the author was without credit, because to boast of *meekness* is the reverse of meekness, and is *a lie in sentiment.*

In Deuteronomy, the style and manner of writing marks more evidently than in the former books that Moses is not the writer. The manner here used is dramatical: the writer opens the subject by a short introductory discourse, and then introduces Moses in the act of speaking, and, when he has made Moses finish his harangue, he (the writer) resumes his own part, and speaks till he brings Moses forward again, and at last closes the scene with an account of the death, funeral and character of Moses.

This interchange of speakers occurs four times in this book: from the first verse of the first chapter to the end of the fifth verse it is the writer who speaks; he then introduces Moses as in the act of making his harangue, and this continues to the end of the fortieth verse of the fourth chapter; here the writer drops Moses, and speaks historically of what was done in consequence of what Moses, when living, is supposed to have said, and which the writer has dramatically rehearsed.

The writer opens the subject again in the first verse of the fifth chapter, though it is only by saying that Moses called the people of Israel together; he then introduces Moses as before, and continues him, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 26th chapter. He does the same thing at the beginning of the 27th chapter; and continues Moses, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 28th chapter. At the 29th chapter the writer speaks again, through the whole of the first verse and the first line of the second verse, where he introduces Moses for the last time, and continues him, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 33d chapter.

The writer having now finished the rehearsal on the part of Moses, comes forward and speaks through the whole of the last chapter. He begins by telling the reader that Moses went up to the top of Pisgah; that he saw from thence the land which (the writer says) had been promised to Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob; that he, Moses, died there, in the land of Moab, but that no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day—that is, unto the time in which the writer lived who wrote the book of Deuteronomy. The writer then tells us that Moses was 110 years of age when he died; that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated; and he concludes by saying that there arose not a prophet *since* in Israel like unto Moses, whom, says this anonymous writer, the Lord knew face to face.

Having thus shown, as far as grammatical evidence applies, that Moses was not the writer of those books, I will, after making a few observations on the inconsistencies of the writer of the book of Deuteronomy, proceed to show, from the historical and chronological evidence contained in those books, that Moses, *was not*, because *he could not be*, the writer of them; and consequently, that there is no authority for believing, that the inhuman and horrid butcheries of men, women, and children, told in those books, were done, as those books say they were, at the command of God. It a duty incumbent on every true Deist, that he vindicate the moral justice of God against the calumnies of the Bible.

The writer of the book of Deuteronomy, whoever he was, (for it is an anonymous work,) is obscure, and also in contradiction with himself, in the account he has given of Moses.

After telling that Moses went to the top of Pisgah (and it does not appear from any account that he ever came down again) he tells us, that Moses died *there* in the land of Moab, and that *he* buried him in a valley in the land of Moab; but as there is no antecedent to the pronoun *he*, there is no knowing who *he* was that did bury him. If the writer meant that *he* (God) buried him, how should *he* (the writer) know it? or why should we (the readers) believe him? since we know not who the writer was that tells us so, for certainly Moses could not himself tell where he was buried.

The writer also tells us, that no man knoweth where the sepulcher of Moses is *unto this day*, meaning the time in which this writer lived; how then should he know that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab? for as the writer lived long after the time of Moses, as is evident from his using the expression of *unto this day*, meaning a great length of time after the death of Moses, he certainly was not at his

funeral; and on the other hand, it is impossible that Moses himself could say, that *no man knoweth where the sepulcher is unto this day.* To make Moses the speaker would be an improvement on the play of a child that hides himself and cries, *Nobody can find me;* nobody can find Moses.

This writer has nowhere told us how he came by the speeches which he has put into the mouth of Moses to speak, and, therefore, we have a right to conclude, that he either composed them himself, or wrote them from oral tradition. One or the other of these is the more probable, since he has given, in the fifth chapter, a table of commandments, in which that called the fourth commandment is different from the fourth commandment in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. In that of Exodus, the reason given for keeping the seventh day is, "because (says the commandment) God made the heavens and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh;" but in that of Deuteronomy, the reason given is, that it was the day on which the children of Isral came out of Egypt, and *therefore*, says this commandment, *the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day. This* makes no mention of the creation, nor *that* of the coming out of Egypt. There are also many things given as laws of Moses in this book, that are not to be found in any of the other books; among which is that inhuman and brutal law, chap. xxi. ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, which authorizes parents, the father and the mother, to bring their own children to have them stoned to death for what it is pleased to call stubbornness. But priests have always been fond of preaching up Deuteronomy, for Deuteronomy preaches up tithes; and it is from this book, chap. xxv. ver. 4, they have taken the phrase, and applied it to tithing, that *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn;* and that this might not escape observation, they have noted it in the table of contents at the head of the chapter, though it is only a single verse of less than two lines. O! priests! priests! ye are willing to be compared to an ox, for the sake of tithes. Though it is impossible for us to know *identically* who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him *professionally*, that he was some Jewish priest, who lived, as I shall show in the course of this work, at least three hundred and fifty years after the time of Moses.

I come now to speak of the historical and chronological

evidence. The chronology that I shall use is the Bible chronology; for I mean not to go out of the Bible for evidence of anything, but to make the Bible itself prove historically and chronologically, that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him. It is, therefore, proper that I inform the reader, (such an one at least as may not have the opportunity of knowing it,) that in the larger Bibles, and also in some smaller ones, there is a series of chronology printed in the margin of every page, for the purpose of showing how long the historical matters stated in each page happened, or are supposed to have happened, before Christ, and, consequently, the distance of time between one historical circumstance and another.

I began with the book of Genesis. In the 14th chapter of Genesis, the writer gives an account of Lot being taken prisoner in a battle between the four kings against five, and carried off; and that when the account of Lot being taken came to Abraham, he armed all his household and marched to rescue Lot from the captors; and that he pursued them unto Dan. (ver. 14.)

To show in what manner this expression of *pursuing them unto Dan* applies to the case in question, I will refer to two circumstances, the one in America, the other in France. The city now called New York, in America, was originally New Amsterdam; and the town in France, lately called Havre Marat, was before called Havre de Grace. New Amsterdam was changed to New York in the year 1664; Havre de Grace to Havre Marat in 1793. Should, therefore, any writing be found, though without date, in which the name of New York should be mentioned, it would be certain evidence that such a writing could not have been written before, and must have been written after New Amsterdam was changed to New York, and consequently not till after the year 1664, or at least during the course of that year. And, in like manner, any dateless writing, with the name of Havre Marat, would be certain evidence that such a writing must have been written after Havre de Grace became Havre Marat, and consequently not till after the year 1793, or at least during the course of that year.

I now come to the application of those cases, and to show that there was no such place as *Dan*, till many years after the death of Moses; and, consequently, that Moses could

not be the writer of the book of Genesis, where this account of pursuing them unto *Dan* is given.

The place that is called Dan in the Bible was originally a town of the Gentiles, called Laish; and when the tribe of Dan seized upon this town, they changed its name to Dan, in commemoration of Dan, who was the father of that tribe, and the great grandson of Abraham.

To establish this in proof, it is necessary to refer from Genesis to the 18th chapter of the book called the Book of Judges. It is there said (ver. 27) *that they* (the Danites) *came unto Laish to a people that were quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword* (the Bible is filled with murder) *and burned the city with fire; and they built a city*, (ver. 28,) and dwelt therein, *and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan, their father, howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.*

This account of the Danites taking possession of Laish and changing it to Dan, is placed in the Book of Judges immediately after the death of Samson. The death of Samson is said to have happened 1120 years before Christ, and that of Moses 1451 before Christ, and, therefore, according to the historical arrangement, the place was not called Dan till 331 years after the death of Moses.

There is a striking confusion between the historical and the chronological arrangement in the Book of Judges. The five last chapters, as they stand in the book, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, are put chronologically before all the preceding chapters; they are made to be 28 years before the 16th chapter, 266 before the 15th, 245 before the 13th, 195 before the 9th, 90 before the 4th, and 15 years before the first chapter. This shows the uncertain and fabulous state of the Bible. According to the chronological arrangement, the taking of Laish and giving it the name of Dan, is made to be 20 years after the death of Joshua, who was the successor of Moses; and by the historical order as it stands in the book, it is made to be 306 years after the death of Joshua, and 331 after that of Moses; but they both exclude Moses from being the writer of Genesis because, according to either of the statements, no such place as Dan existed in the time of Moses; and therefore, the writer of Genesis must have been some person who lived after the town of Laish had the name of Dan; and who that person was nobody knows; and con-

sequently the Book of Genesis is anonymous and without authority.

I proceed now to state another point of historical and chronological evidence, and to show therefrom, as in the preceding case, that Moses is not the author of the Book of Genesis.

In the 36th chapter of Genesis there is given a genealogy of the sons and descendants of Esau, who are called Edomites, and also a list, by name, of the kings of Edom; in enumerating of which, it is said, verse 31, "*And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.*"

Now, were any dateless writings to be found, in which, speaking of any past events, the writer should say, these things happened before there was any Congress in America, or before there was any Convention in France; it would be evidence that such writings could not have been written before, and could only be written after there was a Congress in America, or a Convention in France, as the case might be; and, consequently, that it could not be written by any person who died before there was a Congress in the one country, or a Convention in the other.

Nothing is more frequent, as well in history as in conversation, than to refer to a fact in the room of a date: it is most natural so to do, because a fact fixes itself in the memory better than a date; secondly, because the fact includes the date, and serves to excite two ideas at once; and this manner of speaking by circumstances implies as positively that the fact alluded to is *past*, as if it was so expressed. When a person speaking upon any matter, says, It was before I was married, or before my son was born, or before I went to America, or before I went to France, it is absolutely understood, and intended to be understood, that he has been married, that he has had a son, that he has been in America, or been in France. Language does not admit of using this mode of expression in any other sense; and whenever such an expression is found anywhere, it can only be understood in the sense in which only it could have been used.

The passage, therefore, that I have quoted—"that these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned *any* king over the children of Israel," could only have been

written after the first king began to reign over them; and, consequently, that the Book of Genesis, so far from having been written by Moses, could not have been written till the time of Saul at least. This is the positive sense of the passage; but the expression, *any* king, implies more kings than one, at least it implies two, and this will carry it to the time of David; and, if taken in a general sense, it carries itself through all the time of the Jewish monarchy.

Had we met with this verse in any part of the Bible that *professed* to have been written after kings began to reign in Israel, it would have been impossible not to have seen the application of it. It happens then that this is the case; the two books of Chronicles, which gave a history of all the kings of Israel, are *professedly*, as well as in fact, written after the Jewish monarchy began; and this verse that I have quoted, and all the remaining verses of the 36th chapter of Genesis, are, word for word, in the first chapter of Chronicles, beginning at the 43d verse.

It was with consistency that the writer of the Chronicles could say, as he has said, 1st Chron. chap. i. ver. 43, *These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*, because he was going to give, and has given, a list of the kings that had reigned in Israel; but as it is impossible that the same expression could have been used before that period, it is as certain as anything can be proved from historical language, that this part of Genesis is taken from Chronicles, and that Genesis is not so old as Chronicles, and probably not so old as the book of Homer, or as Æsop's Fables, admitting Homer to have been, as the tables of chronology state, contemporary with David or Solomon, and Æsop to have lived about the end of the Jewish monarchy.

Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the word of God has stood, and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Tales, without the merit of being entertaining; and the account of men living to eight and nine hundred years becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of the Mythology.

Besides, the character of Moses, as stated in the Bible, is the most horrid that can be imagined. If those accounts be true, he was the wretch that first began and carried on wars on the score, or on the pretense, of religion; and under that mask, or that infatuation, committed the most unexampled atrocities that are to be found in the history of any nation, of which I will state only one instance.

When the Jewish army returned from one of their murdering and plundering excursions, the account goes on as follows, Numbers, chap. xxxi. ver. 13:

"And Moses, and Eleazer the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp; and Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle; and Moses said unto them, *Have ye saved all the women alive?* behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the council of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now, therefore, *kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him; but all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him keep alive for yourselves.*

Among the detestable villains that in any period of the world have disgraced the name of man, it is impossible to find a greater than Moses, if this account be true. Here is an order to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters.

Let any mother put herself in the situation of those mothers; one child murdered, another destined to violation, and herself in the hands of an executioner; let any daughter put herself in the situation of those daughters, destined as a prey to the murderers of a mother and a brother, and what will be their feelings? It is in vain that we attempt to impose upon nature, for nature will have her course, and the religion that tortures all her social ties is a false religion.

After this detestable order follows an account of the plunder taken, and the manner of dividing it; and here it is that the profaneness of priestly hypocrisy increases the catalogue of crimes. Verse 37, "*And the Lord's tribute* of the sheep was six hundred and three score and fifteen; and

the beeves was thirty and six thousand, of which the *Lord's tribute* was threescore and twelve; and the asses were thirty thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was threescore and one; and the persons were thirty thousand, of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two." In short, the matters contained in this chapter, as well as in many other parts of the Bible, are too horrid for humanity to read, or for decency to hear; for it appears, from the 35th verse of this chapter, that the number of women-children consigned to debauchery by the order of Moses was thirty-two thousand.

People in general know not what wickedness there is in this pretended word of God. Brought up in habits of superstition, they take it for granted that the Bible is true, and that it is good; they permit themselves not to doubt of it, and they carry the ideas they form of the benevolence of the Almighty to the book which they have been taught to believe was written by his authority. Good heavens! it is quite another thing; it is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy; for what can be greater blasphemy, than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty?

But to return to my subject, that of showing that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him, and that the Bible is spurious. The two instances I have already given would be sufficient, without any additional evidence, to invalidate the authenticity of any book that pretended to be four or five hundred years more ancient than the matters it speaks of, or refers to, as facts; for in the case of *pursuing them unto Dan*, and of *the kings that reigned over the children of Israel*, not even the flimsy pretense of prophecy can be pleaded. The expressions are in the preter tense, and it would be downright idiotism to say that a man could prophesy in the preter tense.

But there are many other passages scattered throughout those books that unite in the same point of evidence. It is said in Exodus, (another of the books ascribed to Moses,) chap. xvi., verse 34, "And the children of Israel did eat manna *until they came to a land inhabited;* they did eat manna *until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*

Whether the children of Israel ate manna or not, or what manna was, or whether it was anything more than a kind of

fungus or small mushroom, or other vegetable substance common to that part of the country, makes nothing to my argument; all that I mean to show is, that it is not Moses that could write this account, because the account extends itself beyond the life and time of Moses. Moses, according to the Bible, (but it is such a book of lies and contradictions there is no knowing which part to believe, or whether any,) dies in the wilderness, and never came upon the borders of the land of Canaan; and, consequently, it could not be he that said what the children of Israel did, or what they ate when they came there. This account of eating manna, which they tell us was written by Moses, extends itself to the time of Joshua, the successor of Moses, as appears by the account given in the book of Joshua, after the children of Israel had passed the river Jordan, and came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Joshua, chap. v. verse 12. "*And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.*"

But a more remarkable instance than this occurs in Deuteronomy; which, while it shows that Moses could not be the writer of that book, shows also the fabulous notions that prevailed at that time about giants. In the third chapter of Deuteronomy, among the conquests said to be made by Moses, is an account of the taking of Og, king of Bashan, ver. 11: "For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the race of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man." A cubit is 1 foot 9-8881000ths inches; the length, therefore, of the bed was 16 feet 4 inches, and the breadth 7 feet 4 inches; thus much for this giant's bed. Now for the historical part, which, though the evidence is not so direct and positive, as in the former cases, it is nevertheless very presumable and corroborating evidence, and is better than the *best* evidence on the contrary side.

The writer, by way of proving the existence of this giant, refers to his bed, as an *ancient relic*, and says, is it not in Rabbath (or Rabbah) of the children of Ammon? meaning that it is; for such is frequently the Bible method of affirming a thing. But it could not be Moses that said this, because

Moses could know nothing about Rabbah, nor of what was in it. Rabbah was not a city belonging to this giant king, nor was it one of the cities that Moses took. The knowledge, therefore, that this bed was at Rabbah, and of the particulars of its dimensions, must be referred to the time when Rabbah was taken, and this was not till four hundred years after the death of Moses; for which, see 2 Sam., chap. xii., ver. 26: "And Joab (David's general) fought against *Rabbah of the children of Ammon*, and took the royal city."

As I am not undertaking to point out all the contradictions in time, place and circumstance, that abound in the books ascribed to Moses, and which prove to a demonstration that those books could not be written by Moses, nor in the time of Moses, I proceed to the book of Joshua, and to show that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous and without authority. The evidence I shall produce is contained in the book itself; I will not go out of the Bible for proof against the supposed authenticity of the Bible. False testimony is always good against itself.

Joshua, according to the first chapter of Joshua, was the immediate successor of Moses; he was, moreover, a military man, which Moses was not, and he continued as chief of the people of Israel 25 years; that is, from the time Moses died, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1451 years before Christ, until 1426 years before Christ, when, according to the same chronology, Joshua died. If, therefore, we find in this book, said to have been written by Joshua, reference to *facts done* after the death of Joshua, it is evidence that Joshua could not be the author; and also that the book could not have been written till after the time of the latest fact which it records. As to the character of the book, it is horrid; it is a military history of rapine and murder, as savage and brutal as those recorded of his predecessor in villainy and hypocrisy, Moses; and the blasphemy consists, as in the former books, in ascribing those deeds to the order of the Almighty.

In the first place, the book of Joshua, as is the case in the preceding books, is written in the third person; it is the historian of Joshua that speaks, for it would have been absurd and vain-glorious that Joshua should say of himself, as is said of him in the last verse of the sixth chapter, that "*his fame was noised throughout all the country.*" I now come more immediately to the proof.

In the 24th chapter, ver. 31, it is said, "that Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and *all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua.*" Now, in the name of common sense, can it be Joshua that relates what people had done after he was dead? This account must not only have been wriiten by some historian that lived after Joshua, but that lived also after the elders that outlived Joshua.

There are several passages of a general meaning with respect to time, scattered throughout the book of Joshua, that carries the time in which the book was written to a distance from the time of Joshua, but without marking by exclusion any particular time, as in the passage above quoted. In that passage, the time that intervened between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders is excluded descriptively and absolutely, and the evidence substantiates that the book could not have been written till after the death of the last.

But though the passages to which I allude, and which I am going to quote, do not designate any particular time by exclusion, they imply a time far more distant from the days of Joshua than is contained between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders. Such is the passage, chap. x. ver. 14; where, after giving an account that the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, at the command of Joshua, (a tale only fit to amuse children,) the passage says, "And there was no day like that, before it, nor after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man."

This tale of the sun standing still upon Mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, is one of those fables that detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened without being known all over the world. One-half would have wondered why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set; and the tradition of it would be universal, whereas there is not a nation in the world that knows anything about it. But why must the moon stand still? What occasion could there be for moonlight in the daytime, and that too while the sun shined? As a poetical figure, the whole is well enough; it is akin to that in the song of Deborah and Barak, *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera;* but it is inferior to the figurative declaration of Mahomet to the persons who came to expostulate with him

on his going on, *Wert thou*, said he, *to come to me with the sun in thy right hand and the moon in thy left, it should not alter my career.* For Joshua to have exceeded Mahomet, he should have put the sun and moon one in each pocket, and carried them as Guy Faux carried his dark lantern, and taken them out to shine as he might happen to want them.

The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again; the account, however, abstracted from the poetical fancy, shows the ignorance of Joshua, for he should have commanded the earth to have stood still.

The time implied by the expression *after* it, that is, after that day, being put in comparison with all the time that passed *before* it, must, in order to give any expressive signification to the passage, mean a *great length of time;*—for example, it would have been ridiculous to have said so the next day, or the next week, or the next month, or the next year; to give, therefore, meaning to the passage, comparative with the wonder it relates, and the prior time it alludes to, it must mean centuries of years; less, however, than one would be trifling, and less than two would be barely admissible.

A distant, but general time, is also expressed in the 8th chapter; where, after giving an account of the taking the city of Ai, it is said, ver. 28th, "And Joshua burned Ai, and made it an heap forever, a desolation *unto this day;*" and again, ver. 29, where, speaking of the king of Ai, whom Joshua had hanged, and buried at the entering of the gate, it is said, "And he raised thereon a great heap of stones, which remaineth unto this day," that is, unto the day or time in which the writer of the book of Joshua lived. And again, in the 10th chapter, where, after speaking of the five kings whom Joshua had hanged on five trees, and then thrown in a cave, it is said, "And he laid great stones on the cave's mouth, which remain unto this very day."

In enumerating the several exploits of Joshua, and of the tribes, and of the places which they conquered or attempted, it is said, c. xv. ver. 63, "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of

Judah *at Jerusalem unto this day.*" The question upon this passage is, at what time did the Jebusites and the children of Judah dwell together at Jerusalem? As this matter occurs again in the first chapter of Judges, I shall reserve my observations till I come to that part.

Having thus shown from the book of Joshua itself, without any auxiliary evidence whatever, that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous, and consequently without authority, I proceed, as before-mentioned, to the book of Judges.

The book of Judges is anonymous on the face of it; and, therefore, even the pretense is wanting to call it the word of God; it has not so much as a nominal voucher; it is altogether fatherless.

This book begins with the same expression as the book of Joshua. That of Joshua begins, chap. i. ver. 1, *Now after the death of Moses, etc.*, and this of the Judges begins, *Now after the death of Joshua, etc.* This, and the similarity of style between the two books, indicate that they are the work of the same author, but who he was, is altogether unknown; the only point that the book proves is, that the author lived long after the time of Joshua; for though it begins as if it followed immediately after his death, the second chapter is an epitome or abstract of the whole book, which, according to the Bible chronology, extends its history through a space of 306 years; that is, from the death of Joshua, 1426 years before Christ, to the death of Samson, 1120 years before Christ, and only 25 years before Saul went *to seek his father's asses, and was made king.* But there is good reason to believe, that it was not written till the time of David, at least, and that the book of Joshua was not written before the same time.

In the first chapter of Judges, the writer, after announcing the death of Joshua, proceeds to tell what happened between the children of Judah and the native inhabitants of the land of Canaan. In this statement, the writer, having abruptly mentioned Jerusalem in the 7th verse, says immediately after, in the 8th verse, by way of explanation, "Now the children of Judah *had* fought against Jerusalem, and *taken* it;" consequently this book could not have been written before Jerusalem had been taken. The reader will recollect the quotation I have just before made from the 15th

chapter of Joshua, ver. 63, where it said that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem at this day*, meaning the time when the book of Joshua was written.

The evidence I have already produced, to prove that the books I have hitherto treated of were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, nor till many years after their death, if such persons ever lived, is already so abundant, that I can afford to admit this passage with less weight than I am entitled to draw from it. For the case is that so far as the Bible can be credited as an history, the city of Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David; and, consequently, the books of Joshua, and of Judges, were not written till after the commencement of the reign of David, which was 370 years after the death of Joshua.

The name of the city, that was afterwards called Jerusalem, was originally Jebus, or Jebusi, and was the capital of the Jebusites. The account of David's taking this city is given in 2 Samuel, chapter v., ver. 4, &c.; also in 1 Chron., chap. xiv., ver. 4, &c. There is no mention in any part of the Bible that it was ever taken before, nor any account that favors such an opinion. It is said, either in Samuel or in Chronicles, that they *utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*, as is said of their other conquests; and the silence here observed implies that it was taken by capitulation, and that the Jebusites, the native inhabitants, continued to live in the place after it was taken. The account, therefore, given in Joshua that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah* at Jerusalem at this day, corresponds to no other time than after the taking of the city by David.

Having now shown that every book in the Bible, from Genesis to Judges, is without authenticity, I come to the book of Ruth, an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country-girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed to be called the word of God! It is, however, one of the best books in the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine.

I come next to the two books of Samuel, and to show that those books were not written by Samuel, nor till a great length of time after the death of Samuel; and that they are, like all the former books, anonymous and without authority.

To be convinced that these books have been written much

later than the time of Samuel, and, consequently, not by him, it is only necessary to read the account which the writer gives of Saul going to seek his father's asses, and of his interview with Samuel, of whom Saul went to inquire about those lost asses, as foolish people now-a-days go to a conjurer to inquire after lost things.

The writer, in relating this story of Saul, Samuel and the asses, does not tell it as a thing that had just then happened, but as an ancient *story in the time this writer lived;* for he tells it in the language or terms used at the time that *Samuel* lived, which obliges the writer to explain the story in the terms or language used in the time the *writer* lived.

Samuel, in the account given of him, in the first of those books, chap. ix., is called *the seer;* and it is by this term that Saul inquires after him, ver. 11, "And as they (Saul and his servant) went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water; and they said unto them, *Is the seer here?*" Saul then went according to the direction of these maidens, and met Samuel without knowing him, and said unto him, ver. 18, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the *seer's house is?* and Samuel answered Saul and said, *I am the seer.*"

As the writer of the book of Samuel relates these questions and answers, in the language or manner of speaking used in the time they are said to have been spoken; and as that manner of speaking was out of use when this author wrote, he found it necessary, in order to make the story understood, to explain the terms in which these questions and answers are spoken; and he does this in the 9th verse, where he says, "*before-time*, in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet, was *before-time* called a seer." This proves, as I have before said, that this story of Saul, Samuel and the asses, was an ancient story at the time the book of Samuel was written, and consequently Samuel did not write it, and that that book was without authenticity.

But if we go further into those books the evidence is still more positive that Samuel is not the writer of them: for they relate things that did not happen till several years after the death of Samuel. Samuel died before Saul; for the 1st

Samuel, chap. xxviii. tells, that Saul, and the witch of Endor conjured Samuel up after he was dead; yet the history of the matters contained in those books is extended through the remaining part of Saul's life, and to the latter end of the life of David, who succeeded Saul. The account of the death and burial of Samuel (a thing which he could not write himself) is related in the 25th chapter of the first book of Samuel; and the chronology affixed to this chapter makes this to be 1060 years before Christ; yet the history of this *first* book is bought down to 1056 years before Christ; that is, till the death of Saul, which was not till four years after the death of Samuel.

The second book of Samuel begins with an account of things that did not happen till four years after Samuel was dead; for it begins with the reign of David, who succeeded Saul, and it goes on to the end of David's reign, which was forty-three years after the death of Samuel; and, therefore, the books are in themselves positive evidence that they were not written by Samuel.

I have now gone through all the books in the first part of the Bible, to which the names of persons are affixed, as being the authors of those book, and which the church, styling itself the Christian church, have imposed upon the world as the writings of Moses, Joshua and Samuel; and I have detected and proved the falsehood of this imposition. And now, ye priests, of every description, who have preached and written against the former part of the *Age of Reason*, what have ye to say? Will ye, with all this mass of evidence against you, and staring you in the face, still have the assurance to march into your pulpits, and continue to impose these books on your congregations, as the works of *inspired penmen*, and the word of God, when it is as evident as demonstration can make truth appear, that the persons who, ye say, are the authors, are *not* the authors, and that ye know not who the authors are? What shadow of pretence have ye now to produce for continuing the blasphemous fraud? What have ye still to offer against the pure and moral religion of Deism, in support of your system of falsehood, idolatry and pretended revelation? Had the cruel and murderous orders, with which the Bible is filled, and the numberless torturing executions of men, women, and children, in consequence of those orders, been ascribed to some friend,

whose memory you revered, you would have glowed with satisfaction at detecting the falsehood of the charge, and gloried in defending his injured fame. It is because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or feel no interest in the honor of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference. The evidence I have produced, and shall still produce in the course of this work, to prove that the Bible is without authority, will, whilst it wounds the stubbornness of a priest, relieve and tranquilize the minds of millions; it will free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty which priestcraft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of his moral justice and benevolence.

I come now to the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles. Those books are altogether historical, and are chiefly confined to the lives and actions of the Jewish kings, who in general were a parcel of rascals; but these are matters with which we have no more concern, than we have with the Roman emperors, or Homer's account of the Trojan war. Besides which, as those works are anonymous, and as we know nothing of the writer, or of his character, it is impossible for us to know what degree of credit to give to the matters related therein. Like all other ancient histories, they appear to be a jumble of fable and fact, and of probable and of improbable things; but which, distance of time and place, and change of circumstances in the world, have rendered obsolete and uninteresting.

The chief use I shall make of those books will be that of comparing them with each other, and with other parts of the Bible, to show the confusion, contradiction and cruelty in this pretended word of God.

The first book of Kings begins with the reign of Solomon, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1015 years before Christ; and the second book ends 588 years before Christ, being a little after the reign of Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem and conquering the Jews, carried captive to Babylon. The two books include a space of 427 years.

The two books of Chronicles are a history of the same times, and, in general, of the same persons, by another author; for it would be absurd to suppose that the same

author wrote the history twice over. The first book of Chronicles (after giving the genealogy from Adam to Saul, which takes up the first nine chapters) begins with the reign of David; and the last book ends as in the last book of Kings, soon after the reign of Zedekiah, about 588 years before Christ. The two last verses of the last chapter bring the history 52 years more forward, that is, to 536. But these verses do not belong to the book, as I shall show when I come to speak of the book of Ezra.

The two books of Kings, besides the history of Saul, David and Solomon, who reigned over *all* Israel, contain an abstract of the lives of seventeen kings and one queen, who are styled Kings of Judah, and of nineteen, who are styled Kings of Israel; for the Jewish nation, immediately on the death of Solomon, split into two parties, who chose separate kings, and who carried on most rancorous wars against each other.

Those two books are little more than a history of assassinations, treachery and wars. The cruelties that the Jews had accustomed themselves to practice on the Canaanites, whose country they had savagely invaded under a pretended gift from God, they afterwards practiced as furiously on each other. Scarcely half their kings died a natural death, and, in some instances, whole families were destroyed to secure possession to the successor, who, after a few years, and sometimes only a few months, or less, shared the same fate. In the tenth chapter of the second book of Kings an account is given of two baskets full of children's heads, seventy in number, being exposed at the entrance of the city; they were the children of Ahab, and were murdered by the orders of Jehu, whom Elisha, the pretended man of God, had anointed to be king over Israel, on purpose to commit this bloody deed, and assassinate his predecessor. And in the account of the reign of Manaham, one of the kings of Israel who had murdered Shallum, who had reigned but one month, it is said, Kings, chap. xv., ver. 16, that Manaham smote the city of Tiphsah, because they opened not the city to him, *and all the women that were therein that were with child they ripped up.*

Could we permit ourselves to suppose that the Almighty would distinguish any nation of people by the name of *His*

chosen people, we must suppose that people to have been an example to all the rest of the world of the purest piety and humanity, and not such a nation of ruffians and cut-throats as the ancient Jews were; a people who, corrupted by and copying after such monsters and impostors as Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, had distinguished themselves above all others, on the face of the known earth, for barbarity and wickedness. If we will not stubbornly shut our eyes and steel our hearts, it is impossible not to see, in spite of all that long-established superstition imposes upon the mind, that that flattering appellation of *His chosen people* is no other than a *lie* the priests and leaders of the Jews had invented, to cover the baseness of their own characters, and which Christian priests, sometimes as corrupt and often as cruel, have professed to believe.

The two books of Chronicles are a repetition of the same crimes; but the history is broken in several places by the author leaving out the reign of some of their kings; and in this, as well as in that of Kings, there is such a frequent transition from kings of Judah to kings of Israel, and from kings of Israel to kings of Judah, that the narrative is obscure in the reading. In the same book the history sometimes contradicts itself; for example, in the second book of Kings, chap. i., ver. 8, we are told, but in rather ambiguous terms, that, after the death of Ahaziah, King of Israel, Jehoram, or Joram, (who was of the house of Ahab,) reigned in his stead in the *second year of* Jehoram, or Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah; and in chap. viii., ver. 16, of the same book it is said, and in the *fifth year* of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, began to reign; that is, one chapter says Joram of Judah began to reign in the *second year* of Joram of Israel; and the other chapter says, that Joram of Israel began to reign in the *fifth year* of Joram of Judah.

Several of the most extraordinary matters related in one history, as having happened during the reign of such and such of their kings, are not to be found in the other, in relating the reign of the same king; for example, the two first rival kings, after the death of Solomon, were Rehoboam and Jeroboam; and in 1 Kings, chap. xii. and xiii., an

account is given of Jeroboam making an offering of burnt incense, and that a man who is there called a man of God, cried out against the altar, chap. xiii. ver. 2: "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, and burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." Verse 4: "And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, *Lay hold on him.* And his hand, which he put out against him, *dried up, so that he could not pull it again to him.*"

One would think that such an extraordinary case as this, (which is spoken of as a judgment,) happening to the chief of one of the parties, and that at the first moment of the separation of the Israelites into two nations, would, if it had been true, have been recorded in both histories. But though men, in latter times, have believed *all that the prophets have said unto them*, it does not appear these prophets or historians believed each other; they knew each other too well.

A long account also is given in Kings about Elijah. It runs through several chapters, and concludes with telling, 2 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 11: "And it came to pass as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared *a chariot of fire and horses of fire*, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah *went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*" Hum! this the author of Chronicles, miraculous as the story is, makes no mention of, though he mentions Elijah by name; neither does he say anything of the story related in the second chapter of the same book of Kings, of a parcel of children calling Elisha *bald head, bald head;* and that this *man of God*, ver. 24, "turned back, and looked upon them, *and cursed them in the name of the Lord;* and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them." He also passes over in silence the story told, 2 Kings, chap. xiii., that when they were burying a man in the sepulchre, where Elisha had been buried, it happened that the dead man, as they were letting him down, (ver. 21,) "touched the bones of Elisha, and he (the dead man) *revived, and stood upon his feet.*" The story does not tell us whether they buried the man notwithstanding he revived and stood upon his feet, or drew

him up again. Upon all these stories the writer of Chronicles is as silent as any writer of the present day, who did not choose to be accused of *lying*, or at least of romancing, would be about stories of the same kind.

But, however these two historians may differ from each other, with respect to the tales related by either, they are silent alike with respect to those men styled prophets, whose writings fill up the latter part of the Bible, Isaiah, who lived in the time of Hezekiah, is mentioned in Kings, and again in Chronicles, when these historians are speaking of that reign; but except in one or two instances at most, and those very slightly, none of the rest are so much as spoken of, or even hinted at; though, according to the Bible chronology, they lived within the time those histories were written; some of them long before. If those prophets, as they are called, were men of such importance in their day, as the compilers of the Bible, and priests and commentators have since represented them to be, how can it be accounted for, that not one of these histories should say anything about them?

The history in the books of Kings and of Chronicles is brought forward, as I have already said, to the year 588 before Christ; it will, therefore, be proper to examine which of these prophets lived before that period.

Here follows a table of all the prophets, with the times in which they lived before Christ, according to the chronology affixed to the first chapter of each of the books of the prophets; and also of the number of years they lived before the books of Kings and Chronicles were written.

This table is either not very honorable for the Bible historians, or not very honorable for the Bible prophets; and I leave to priests and commentators, who are very learned in little things, to settle the point of *etiquette* between the two; and to assign a reason, why the authors of Kings and Chronicles have treated those prophets, whom in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have considered as poets, with as much degrading silence as any historian of the present day would treat Peter Pindar.

I have one observation more to make on the Book of Chronicles; after which I shall pass on to review the remaining books of the Bible.

Table of the Prophets, with the time in which they lived before Christ, and also before the books of Kings and Chronicles were written.

Names.	Years before Christ.	Yrs. before Kings and Chronicles.	Observations.
Isaiah - -	760	172	mentioned.
Jeremiah - -	629	41	mentioned only in the last chap. of Chron.
Ezekiel - -	595	7	not mentioned.
Daniel - -	607	19	not mentioned.
Hosea - -	785	97	not mentioned.
Joel - -	800	212	not mentioned.
Amos - -	789	199	not mentioned.
Obadiah - -	789	199	not mentioned.
Jonah - -	862	274	see the note*
Micah - -	750	162	not mentioned.
Nahum - -	713	125	not mentioned.
Habakkuk - -	620	38	not mentioned.
Zephaniah - -	630	42	not mentioned.
Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi — after the year 588			

* In 2 Kings, chap. xiv. ver. 25, the name of Jonah is mentioned on account of the restoration of a tract of land by Jeroboam; but nothing further is said of him, nor is any allusion made to the book of Jonah, nor to his expedition to Nineveh, nor to his encounter with the whale.

In my obsvervations on the Book of Genesis, I have quoted a passage from the 36th chapter, verse 31, which evidently refers to a time *after* that kings began to reign over the children of Israel; and I have shown that as this verse is verbatim the same as in Chronicles, chap. i., verse 43, where it stands consistently with the order of history, which in Genesis it does not, that the verse in Genesis, and a great part of the 36th chapter, have been taken from Chronicles; and that the book of Genesis, though it is placed first in the Bible and ascribed to Moses, has been manufactured by some unknown person, after the Book of Chronicles was written, which was not until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses.

The evidence I proceed by to substantiate this is regular, and has in it but two stages. First, as I have already stated, that the passage in Genesis refers itself for *time* to Chronicles; secondly, that the book of Chronicles, to which this passage refers itself, was not *begun* to be written until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses. To prove this, we have only to look into the thirteenth verse

of the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, where the writer, in giving the genealogy of the descendants of David, mentions Zedekiah; and it was in the time of Zedekiah, that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, 588 years before Christ, and consequently more than 860 years after Moses. Those who have superstitiously boasted of the antiquity of the Bible, and particularly of the books ascribed to Moses, have done it without examination, and without any authority than that of one credulous man telling it to another; for, so far as historical and chronological evidence applies, the very first book in the Bible is not so ancient as the book of Homer, by more than three hundred years, and is about the same age with Æsop's Fables.

I am not contending for the morality of Homer; on the contrary, I think it a book of false glory; tending to inspire immoral and mischievous notions of honor; and with respect to Æsop, though the moral is in general just, the fable is often cruel; and the cruelty of the fable does more injury to the heart, especially in a child, than the moral does good to the judgment.

Having now dismissed Kings and Chronicles, I come to the next in course, the book of Ezra.

As one proof, among others, I shall produce, to show the disorder in which this pretended word of God, the Bible, has been put together, and the uncertainty of who the authors were, we have only to look at the three first verses in Ezra, and the two last in Chronicles; for by what kind of cutting and shuffling has it been that the three first verses in Ezra should be the two last verses in Chronicles, or that the two last in Chronicles should be the three first in Ezra? Either the authors did not know their own works, or the compilers did not know the authors.

Two last Verses of Chronicles.

Ver. 22. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Three first Verses of Ezra.

Ver. 1. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2. Thus saith Cyrus, king of

23. Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of his people? the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.

Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up, *to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.*

The last verse in Chronicles is broken abruptly, and ends in the middle of the phrase with the word up, without signifying to what place. This abrupt break, and the appearance of the same verses in the different books, show, as I have already said, the disorder and ignorance in which the Bible has been put together, and that the compilers of it had no authority for what they were doing, nor we any authority for believing what they have done.*

The only thing that has any appearance of certainty in the book of Ezra, is the time in which it was written, which was

*I observed, as I passed along, several broken and senseless passages in the Bible, without thinking them of consequence enough to be introduced in the body of the work; such as that, 1 Samuel, chap. xiii. ver. 1, where it is said, "Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men," etc. The first part of the verse, that Saul reigned one year has no sense, since it does not tell us what Saul did, nor say anything of what happened at the end of that one year; and it is, besides, mere absurdity to say he reigned one year, when the very next phrase says he had reigned two; for if he had reigned two, it was impossible not to have reigned one.

Another instance occurs in Joshua, chap. v. where the writer tells us a story of an angel (for such the table of contents at the head of the chapter calls him) appearing unto Joshua; and the story ends abruptly, and without any conclusion. The story is as follows:—Ver. 13, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Verse 14, "And he said, Nay; but as the captain of the hosts of our Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?" Verse 15, "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standeth is holy. And Joshua did so." And what then; nothing, for here the story ends, and the chapter too.

Either this story is broken off in the middle, or it is a story told by some Jewish humorist, in ridicule of Joshua's pretended mission from God; and the compilers of the Bible, not perceiving the design of the story, have told it as a serious matter. As a story of humor and ridicule, it has a great deal of point, for it pompously introduces an angel in the figure of a man, with a drawn sword in his hand, before whom Joshua falls on his face to the earth, and worships, (which is contrary to their second commandment;) and then, this most important embassy from heaven ends, in telling Joshua to pull off his shoe. It might as well have told him to pull up his breeches.

It is certain, however, that the Jews did not credit everything their leaders told them, as appears from the cavalier manner in which they speak of Moses, when he was gone into the mount. "As for this Moses," say they, "we wot not what is become of him." Exod. chap. xxxii. ver. 1.

immediately after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about 536 years before Christ. Ezra (who, according to the Jewish commentators, is the same person as is called Esdras in the Apocrypha) was one of the persons who returned, and who, it is probable, wrote the account of that affair. Nehemiah, whose book follows next to Ezra, was another of the returned persons; and who, it is also probable, wrote the account of the same affair, in the book that bears his name. But those accounts are nothing to us, nor to any other persons, unless it be to the Jews, as a part of the history of their nation; and there is just as much of the word of God in those books as there is in any of the histories of France, or Rapin's history of England, or the history of any other country.

But even in matters of historical record, neither of those writers are to be depended upon. In the second chapter of Ezra, the writer gives a list of the tribes and families, and of the precise number of souls of each that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem; and this enrollment of the persons so returned appears to have been one of the principal objects for writing the book, but in this there is an error that destroys the intention of the undertaking.

The writer begins his enrollment in the following manner, chap. ii., ver. 3: "The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy and four." Ver. 4: "The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two." And in this manner he proceeds through all the families; and in the 64th verse he makes a total, and says, the whole congregation together was *forty and two thousand three hundred and three score.*

Chap. ii.			Bro't forward,	11,577	Bro't forward,	15,783	Bro't forw'd,	19,444
Verses	3,	2,172	Ver. 13,	666	Ver. 23,	128	Ver. 33,	725
	4,	372	14,	2,056	24,	42	34,	345
	5,	775	15,	454	25,	743	35,	3,630
	6,	2,812	16,	98	26,	621	36,	973
	7,	1,254	17,	323	27,	122	37,	1,052
	8,	945	18,	112	28,	223	38,	1,247
	9,	760	19,	223	29,	52	39,	1,017
	10,	642	20,	95	30,	156	40,	74
	11,	623	21,	123	31,	1,254	41,	128
	12,	1,222	22,	56	32,	320	42,	139
							58,	392
							60,	652
		11,577		15,783		19,444	Total,	29,818

But, whoever will take the trouble of casting up the several particulars, will find that the total is but 29,818; so that the error is 12,542.* What certainty, then, can there be in the Bible for anything?

Nehemiah, in like manner, gives a list of the returned families, and of the number of each family. He begins, as in Ezra, by saying, chap. vii., ver. 8: "The children of Parosh, two thousand three hundred and seventy-two"; and so on through all the families. The list differs in several of the particulars from that of Ezra. In the 66th verse, Nehemiah makes a total, and says, as Ezra had said: "The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and three score." But the particulars of this list make a total of but 31,089, so that the error here is 11,271. These writers may do well enough for Bible-makers, but not for anything where truth and exactness is necessary. The next book in course is the book of Esther. If Madam Esther thought it any honor to offer herself as a kept mistress to Ahasuerus, or as a rival to Queen Vashti, who had refused to come to a drunken king, in the midst of a drunken company, to be made a show of, (for the account says they had been drinking seven days, and were merry,) let Esther and Mordecai look to that, it is no business of ours—at least, it is none of mine; besides which the story has a great deal the appearance of being fabulous, and is also anonymous. I pass on to the book of Job.

The book of Job differs in character from all the books we have hitherto passed over. Treachery and murder make no part of this book; it is the meditations of a mind strongly impressed with the vicissitudes of human life, and by turns sinking under and struggling against the pressure. It is a highly-wrought composition, between willing submission and involuntary discontent; and shows man, as he sometimes is, more disposed to be resigned than he is capable of being. Patience has but a small share in the character of the person of whom the book treats; on the contrary, his grief is often impetuous, but he still endeavors to keep a guard upon it, and seems determined, in the midst of accumulating ills, to impose upon himself the hard duty of contentment.

I have spoken in a respectful manner of the book of Job

* *Particulars of the families from the second chapter of Ezra*

in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, but without knowing, at that time, what I have learned since; which is that, from all the evidence that can be collected, the book of Job does not belong to the Bible.

I have seen the opinion of two Hebrew commentators, Abenezra and Spinoza, upon this subject; they both say that the book of Job carries no internal evidence of being a Hebrew book; that the genius of the composition, and the drama of the piece, are not Hebrew; that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that the author of the book was a Gentile; that the character represented under the name of Satan (which is the first and only time this name is mentioned in the Bible) does not correspond to any Hebrew idea; and that the two convocations which the Deity is supposed to have made of those whom the poem calls sons of God, and the familiarity which this supposed Satan is stated to have with the Deity, are in the same case.

It may also be observed that the book shows itself to be the production of a mind cultivated in science, which the Jews, so far from being famous for, were very ignorant of, the allusions to objects of natural philosophy are frequent and strong, and are of a different cast to anything in the books known to be Hebrew. The astronomical names, Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus, are Greek and not Hebrew names, and it does not appear from anything that is to be found in the Bible, that the Jews knew anything of astronomy, or that they studied it; they had no translation of those names into their own language, but adopted the names as they found them in the poem.

That the Jews did translate the literary productions of the Gentile nations into the Hebrew language, and mix them with their own, is not a matter of doubt; the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs is an evidence of this; it is there said, ver. 1, *The word of king Lemuel, the prophecy which his mother taught him.* This verse stands as a preface to the proverbs that follow, and which are not the proverbs of Solomon, but of Lemuel; and this Lemuel was not one of the kings of Israel, nor of Judah, but of some other country, and consequently a Gentile. The Jews, however, have adopted his proverbs, and as thay cannot give any account who the author of the book of Job was, or how they came

by the book; and as it differs in character from the Hebrew writings, and stands totally unconnected with every other book and chapter in the Bible, before it, and after it, it has all the circumstantial evidence of being originally a book of the Gentiles.*

The Bible-makers, and those regulators of time, the chronologists, appear to have been at a loss where to place or how to dispose of the book of Job; for it contains no one historical circumstance, nor allusion to any, that might serve to determine its place in the Bible. But it would not have answered the purpose of these men to have informed the world of their ignorance; and, therefore, they have affixed it to the æra of 1520 years before Christ, which is during the time the Israelites were in Egypt, and for which they have just as much authority and no more than I should have for saying it was a thousand years before that period. The probability, however, is, that it is older than any book in the Bible; and it is the only one that can be read without indignation or disgust.

We know nothing of what the ancient Gentile world (as it is called) was before the time of the Jews, whose practice has been to calumniate and blacken the character of all other nations; and it is from the Jewish accounts that we have learned to call them heathens. But, as far as we know to the contrary, they were a just and moral people, and not addicted, like the Jews, to cruelty and revenge, but of whose profession of faith we are unacquainted. It appears to have been their custom to personify both virtue and vice by statues and images, as is done now-a-days both by statuary and by painting; but it does not follow from this, that they worshiped them any more than we do. I pass on to the book of

*The prayer known by the name of *Agur's Prayer*, in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, immediately preceding the proverbs of Lemuel, and which is the only sensible, well-conceived, and well-expressed prayer in the Bible, has much the appearance of being a prayer taken from the Gentiles. The name of Agur occurs on no other occasion than this; and he is introduced, together with the prayer ascribed to him, in the same manner, and nearly in the same words, that Lemuel and his proverbs are introduced in the chapter that follows. The first verse of the 30th chapter says, "The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy;" here the word prophecy is used with the same application it has in the following chapter of Lemuel, unconnected with anything of prediction. The prayer of Agur is in the 8th and 9th verses, "*Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither riches nor poverty, but feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*" This has not any of the marks of being a Jewish prayer, for the Jews never prayed but when they were in trouble, and never for anything but victory, vengeance and riches.

Psalms, of which it is not necessary to make much observation. Some of them are moral, and others are very revengeful; and the greater part relate to certain local circumstances of the Jewish nation at the time they were written, with which we have nothing to do. It is, however, an error or an imposition to call them the Psalms of David; they are a collection, as song books are now-a-days, from different song writers, who lived at different times. The 137th Psalm could not have been written till more than 400 years after the time of David, because it was written in commemoration of an event, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which did not happen till that distance of time. "*By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof; for there they that had carried us away captive required of us a song, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.*" As a man would say to an American, or to a Frenchman, or to an Englishman, Sing us one of your American songs, or of your French songs, or of your English songs. This remark with respect to the time this Psalm was written, is of no other use than to show (among others already mentioned) the general imposition the world has been under, with respect to the authors of the Bible. No regard has been paid to time, place, and circumstance; and the names of persons have been affixed to the several books, which it was as impossible they should write, as that a man should walk in procession at his own funeral.

The Book of Proverbs. These, like the Psalms, are a collection, and that from authors belonging to other nations than those of the Jewish nation, as I have shown in the observations upon the book of Job; besides which, some of the proverbs ascribed to Solomon did not appear till two hundred and fifty years after the death of Solomon; for it is said in the 1st verse of the 25th chapter, "*These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out.*" It was two hundred and fifty years from the time of Solomon to the time of Hezekiah. When a man is famous and his name is abroad, he is made the putative father of things he never said or did; and this, most probably, has been the case with Solomon. It appears to have been the fashion of that day to make proverbs, as it is now to make jest-books, and father them upon those who never saw them.

The book of *Ecclesiastes*, or the *Preacher*, is also ascribed to Solomon, and that with much reason, if not with truth. It is written as the solitary reflections of a worn-out debauchee, such as Solomon was, who looking back on scenes he can no longer enjoy, cries out, *All is vanity!* A great deal of the metaphor and of the sentiment is obscure, most probably by translation; but enough is left to show they were strongly pointed in the original.* From what is transmitted to us of the character of Solomon, he was witty, ostentatious, dissolute, and at last melancholy. He lived fast, and died, tired of the world, at the age of fifty-eight years.

Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, are worse than none; and however it may carry with it the appearance of heightened enjoyment, it defeats all the felicity of affection, by leaving it no point to fix upon; divided love is never happy. This was the case with Solomon; and if he could not, with all his pretensions to wisdom, discover it beforehand, he merited, unpitied, the mortification he afterwards endured. In this point of view, his preaching is unnecessary, because, to know the consequences it is only necessary to know the cause. Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, would have stood in place of the whole book. It was needless after this to say that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; for it is impossible to derive happiness from the company of those whom we deprive of happiness.

To be happy in old age it is necessary that we accustom ourselves to objects that can accompany the mind all the way through life, and that we take the rest as good in their day. The mere man of pleasure is miserable in old age; and the mere drudge in business is but little better; whereas, natural philosophy, mathematical and mechanical science, are a continual source of tranquil pleasure; and in spite of the gloomy dogmas of priests, and of superstition, the study of those things is the study of the true theology; it teaches man to know and admire the Creator, for the principles of science are in creation, and are unchangeable, and of divine origin.

Those who knew Benjamin Franklin will recollect, that his mind was ever young; his temper ever serene; science, that never grows gray, was always his mistress. He was

* *Those that look out of the window shall be darkened*, is an obscure figure in translation for loss of sight.

never without an object, for when we cease to have an object, we become like an invalid in an hospital waiting for death.

Solomon's Songs are amorous and foolish enough, but which wrinkled fanaticism has called divine. The compilers of the Bible have placed these songs after the book of Ecclesiastes; and the chronologists have affixed to them the æra of 1014 years before Christ, at which time Solomon, according to the same chronology, was nineteen years of age, and was then forming his seraglio of wives and concubines. The Bible-makers and the chronologists should have managed this matter a little better, and either have said nothing about the time, or chosen a time less inconsistent with the supposed divinity of those songs; for Solomon was then in the honeymoon of one thousand debaucheries.

It should also have occurred to them, that as he wrote, if he did write the book of Ecclesiastes, long after these songs, and in which he exclaims that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that he included those songs in that description. This is the more probable, because he says, or somebody for him, Ecclesiastes, chap. ii.: v. 8: "*I got me men singers and women singers* (most probably to sing those songs), *and musical instruments of all sorts;* and behold (v. 11), all was vanity and vexation of spirit." The compilers, however, have done their work but by halves; for as they have given us the songs, they should have given us the tunes, that we might sing them.

The books called the books of the Prophets, fill up all the remaining parts of the Bible; they are sixteen in number, beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi, of which I have given you a list in my observations upon Chronicles. Of these sixteen prophets, all of whom, except the three last, lived within the time the books of Kings and Chronicles were written; two only, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are mentioned in the history of those books. I shall begin with those two, reserving what I have to say on the general character of the men called prophets to another part of the work.

Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah, will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together; it has neither beginning, middle, nor end; and, except a short historical

part, and a few sketches of history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued, incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor without application, and destitute of meaning; a school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such stuff; it is (at least in translation) that kind of composition and false taste that is properly called prose run mad.

The historical part begins at the 36th chap., and is continued to the end of the 39th chap. It relates to some matters that are said to have passed during the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah, at which time Isaiah lived. This fragment of history begins and ends abruptly; it has not the least connection with the chapter that precedes it, nor with that which follows it, nor with any other in the book. It is probable that Isaiah wrote this fragment himself, because he was an actor in the circumstances it treats of; but, except this part, there are scarcely two chapters that have any connection with each other; one is entitled, at the beginning of the first verse, the burden of Babylon; another, the burden of Moab; another, the burden of Damascus; another, the burden of Egypt; another, the burden of the Desert of the Sea; another, the burden of the Valley of Vision; as you would say, the story of the knight of the burning mountain, the story of Cinderella, or the Children of the Wood, etc., etc.

I have already shown, in the instance of the two last verses of Chronicles, and the three first in Ezra, that the compilers of the Bible mixed and confounded the writings of different authors with each other, which alone, were there no other cause, is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of any compilation, because it is more than presumptive evidence that the compilers are ignorant who the authors were. A very glaring instance of this occurs in the book ascribed to Isaiah. The latter part of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, so far from having been written by Isaiah, could only have been written by some person who lived at least an hundred and fifty years after Isaiah was dead.

These chapters are a compliment to *Cyrus*, who permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, as is stated in Ezra. The last verse of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, are in the following words: "*That saith of*

Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple thy foundations shall be laid; thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee," etc.

What audacity of church and priestly ignorance it is to impose this book upon the world as the writing of Isaiah, when Isaiah, according to their own chronology, died soon after the death of Hezekiah, which was 698 years before Christ; and the decree of Cyrus, in favor of the Jews returning to Jerusalem was, according to the same chronology, 536 years before Christ; which was a distance of time between the two of 162 years. I do not suppose that the compilers of the Bible made these books, but rather that they picked up some loose anonymous essays, and put them together under the names of such authors as best suited their purpose. They have encouraged the imposition, which is next to inventing it; for it was impossible but they must have observed it.

When we see the studied craft of the scripture-makers, in making every part of this romantic book of school-boy's eloquence bend to the monstrous idea of a Son of God, begotten by a ghost on the body of a virgin, there is no imposition we are not justified in suspecting them of. Every phrase and circumstance are marked with the barbarous hand of superstitious torture, and forced into meanings it was impossible they could have. The head of every chapter, the top of every page, are blazoned with the names of Christ and the Church, that the unwary reader might suck in the error before he began to read.

Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, Isaiah, chap. vii. ver. 14, has been interpreted to mean the person called Jesus Christ, and his mother Mary, and has been echoed through Christendom for more than a thousand years; and such has been the rage of this opinion, that scarcely a spot in it but has been stained with blood and marked with desolation in consequence of it. Though it is not my intention to enter into controversy on subjects of this kind, but to confine myself to show that the Bible is spurious; and thus, by taking away the foundation, to overthrow at once

the whole structure of superstition raised thereon; I will, however, stop a moment to expose the fallacious application of this passage.

Whether Isaiah was playing a trick with Ahaz, king of Judah, to whom this passage is spoken, is no business of mine; I mean only to show the misapplication of the passage, and that it has no more reference to Christ and his mother, than it has to me and my mother. The story is simply this:

The king of Syria and the king of Israel (I have already mentioned that the Jews were split into two nations, one of which was called Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem, and the other Israel) made war jointly against Ahaz, king of Judah, and marched their armies toward Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed, and account says, verse 2, "*Their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*"

In this situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the *name of the Lord* (the cant phrase of all the prophets) that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to satisfy Ahaz that this should be the case, tells him to ask a sign. This, the account says, Ahaz declined doing; giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who is the speaker, says, ver. 44, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; *behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, and the 16th verse says, "*And before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good*, the land which thou abhorrest or dreadest (meaning Syria and the kingdom of Israel) shall be forsaken of both her kings." Here then was the sign, and the time limited for the completion of the assurance or promise; namely, before this child should know to refuse the evil and chuse the good.

Isaiah having committed himself thus far, it became necessary to him, in order to avoid the imputation of being a false prophet, and the consequence thereof, to take measures to make this sign appear. It certainly was not a difficult thing, in any time of the world, to find a girl with child, or to make her so; and perhaps Isaiah knew of one beforehand; for I do not suppose the prophets of that day were any more to be trusted than the priests of this, be that, however, as it may, he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, "And I took unto me

faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and *I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son.*"

Here then is the whole story, foolish as it is, of this child, and this virgin; and it is upon the barefaced perversion of this story, that the book of Matthew, and the impudence and sordid interest of priests in later times, have founded a theory which they call the gospel; and have applied this story to signify the person they call Jesus Christ, begotten, they say, by a ghost, whom they call holy, on the body of a woman, engaged in marriage, and afterwards married, whom they call a virgin, 700 years after this foolish story was told; a theory which, speaking for myself, I hesitate not to believe, and to say, is as fabulous and false as God is true.*

But to show the imposition and falsehood of Isaiah, we have only to attend to the sequel of this story; which, though it is passed over in silence in the book of Isaiah, is related in the 28th chapter of the second Chronicles; and which is, that instead of these two kings failing in their attempt against Ahaz, king of Judah, as Isaiah had pretended to foretell in the name of the Lord, they succeeded; Ahaz was defeated and destroyed; a hundred and twenty thousand of his people were slaughtered; Jerusalem was plundered, and two hundred thousand women, and sons and daughters, carried into captivity. Thus much for this lying prophet and impostor Isaiah, and the book of falsehoods that bears his name. I pass on to the book of

Jeremiah. This prophet, as he is called, lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah; and the suspicion was strong against him, that he was a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar. Everything relating to Jeremiah shows him to have been a man of an equivocal character: in his metaphor of the potter and the clay, chap. xvii., he guards his prognostications in such a crafty manner, as always to leave himself a door to escape by, in case the event should be contrary to what he had predicted.

In the 7th and 8th verses of that chapter, he makes the Almighty to say, "At what instant I shall speak concerning

* In the 14th verse of the 7th chapter, it is said, that the child should be called Immanuel; but this name was not given to either of the children, otherwise than as a character which the word signifies. That of the prophetess was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz, and that of Mary was called Jesus.

a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Here was a proviso against one side of the case: now for the other side.

Verses 9 and 10, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice: then I will repent me of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Here is a proviso against the other side; and, according to his plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible.

As to the authenticity of the book, it is only necessary to read it in order to decide positively, that, though some passages recorded therein may have been spoken by Jeremiah, he is not the author of the book. The historical parts, if they can be called by that name, are in the most confused condition; the same events are several times repeated, and that in a manner different, and sometimes in contradiction to each other; and this disorder runs even to the last chapter, where the history, upon which the greater part of the book has been employed, begins anew, and ends abruptly. The book has all the appearance of being a medley of unconnected anecdotes, respecting persons and things of that time, collected together in the same rude manner as if the various and contradictory accounts, that are to be found in a bundle of newspapers, respecting persons and things of the present day, were put together without date, order, or explanation. I will give two or three examples of this kind.

It appears, from the account of the 37th chapter, that the army of Nebuchadnezzar, which is called the army of the Chaldeans, had besieged Jerusalem some time; and on their hearing that the army of Pharaoh, of Egypt, was marching against them they raised the siege, and retreated for a time. It may here be proper to mention, in order to understand this confused history, that Nebuchadnezzar had besieged and taken Jerusalem, during the reign of Jehoakim, the predecessor of Zedekiah; and that it was Nebuchadnezzar who had made Zedekiah king, or rather viceroy; and that this

second siege, of which the book of Jeremiah treats, was in consequence of the revolt of Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar. This will in some measure account for the suspicion that affixes itself to Jeremiah of being a traitor, and in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar; whom Jeremiah calls, in the 43d chap., ver. 10, the servant of God.

The 11th verse of this chapter, (the 37th,) says, "And it came to pass, that, when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem, for fear of Pharaoh's army, that Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem, to go (as this account states) into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people; and when he was in the gate of Benjamin a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah; and he took Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans; then Jeremiah said, It is false, I fall not away to the Chaldeans." Jeremiah being thus stopped and accused, was, after being examined, committed to prison, on suspicion of being a traitor, where he remained, as is stated in the last verse of this chapter.

But the next chapter gives an account of the imprisonment of Jéremiah, which has no connection with this account, but ascribes his imprisonment to another circumstance, and for which we must go back to the 21st chapter. It is there stated, ver. 1, that Zedekiah sent Pashur, the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to Jeremiah to inquire of him concerning Nebuchadnezzar, whose army was then before Jerusalem; and Jeremiah said to them, ver. 8: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I set before you the way of life, and the way of death; he that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey."

This interview and conference breaks off abruptly at the end of the 10th verse of the 21st chapter; and such is the disorder of this book that we have to pass over sixteen chapters, upon various subjects, in order to come at the continuation and event of this conference; and this brings us to the first verse of the 38th chapter, as I have just mentioned.

The 38th chapter opens with saying: "Then Shapatiah, the son of Mattan; Gedaliah, the son of Pashur, and Jucal,

the son of Shelemiah; and Pashur, the son of Malchiah, (here are more persons mentioned than in the 21st chapter,) heard the words that Jeremiah spoke unto the people, saying, *Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live;* (which are the words of the conference,) therefore, (say they to Zedekiah,) we beseech thee, let us put this man to death, *for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but the hurt;*" and at the 6th verse it is said: "Then they took Jeremiah, and put him into a dungeon of Malchiah."

These two accounts are different and contradictory. The one ascribes his imprisonment to his attempt to escape out of the city; the other to his preaching and prophesying in the city; the one to his being seized by the guard at the gate; the other to his being accused before Zedekiah, by the conferees.*

In the next chapter (the 39th) we have another instance of the disordered state of this book; for, notwithstanding the siege of the city by Nebuchadnezzar has been the sub-

*I observed two chapters, 16th and 17th, in the first book of Samuel, that contradict each other with respect to David, and the manner he became acquainted with Saul; as the 37th and 38th chapters of the book of Jeremiah contradict each other with respect to the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment.

In the 16th chapter of Samuel it is said that an evil spirit of God troubled Saul, and that his servants advised him (as a remedy) "to seek out a man who was a cunning player upon the harp." And Saul said, ver. 17: "Provide now a man that can play well, and bring him unto me. Then answered one of his servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him; wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David, thy son. And [verse 21] David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer; and, when the evil spirit of God was upon Saul [verse 23] David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed, and was well."

But the next chapter (17) gives an account, all different to this, of the manner that Saul and David became acquainted. Here it is ascribed to David's encounter with Goliath, when David was sent by his father to carry provision to his brethren in the camp. In the 55th verse of this chapter it is said: "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine [Goliath] he said to Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand; and Saul said unto him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlemite." These two accounts belie each other, because each of them supposes Saul and David not to have known each other before. This book, the Bible, is too ridiculous for criticism.

ject of several of the preceding chapters, particularly the 37th and 38th, the 39th chapter begins as if not a word had been said upon the subject, and as if the reader was to be informed of every particular respecting it, for it begins with saying, ver. 1: "*In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army, against Jerusalem, and besieged it,*" etc., etc.

But the instance in the last chapter (the 52d) is still more glaring; for, though the story has been told over and over again, this chapter still supposes the reader not to know anything of it, for it begins by saying, ver. 1: "*Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah,* (ver. 4,) *and it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it,*" etc., etc.

It is not possible that any one man, and more particularly Jeremiah, could have been the writer of this book. The errors are such as could not have been committed by any person sitting down to compose a work. Were I, or any other man, to write in such a disordered manner, nobody would read what was written; and everybody would suppose that the writer was in a state of insanity. The only way, therefore, to account for this disorder, is, that the book is a medley of detached unauthenticated anecdotes, put together by some stupid book-maker, under the name of Jeremiah; because many of them refer to him, and to the circumstances of the times he lived in.

Of the duplicity, and of the false predictions of Jeremiah, I shall mention two instances, and then proceed to review the remainder of the Bible.

It appears from the 38th chapter, that when Jeremiah was in prison, Zedekiah sent for him, and at this interview, which was private, Jeremiah pressed it strongly on Zedekiah to surrender himself to the enemy. "*If,*" says he, (ver. 17,) "*thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live,*" etc. Zedekiah was apprehensive that what passed at this conference should be known; and he said to Jeremiah, (ver. 25,) "If the princes (meaning

those of Judah) hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee, and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king; hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; and also what the king said unto thee; then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king; that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him, and *he told them according to all the words the king had commanded.*" Thus, this man of God, as he is called, could tell a lie, or very strongly prevaricate, when he supposed it would answer his purpose; for certainly he did not go to Zedekiah to make his supplication, neither did he make it; he went because he was sent for, and he employed that opportunity to advise Zedekiah to surrender himself to Nebuchadnezzar.

In the 34th chapter, is a prophecy of Jeremiah to Zedekiah, in these words, (ver. 2,) "Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire; and thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but thou shalt surely be taken, and delivered into that his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. "Yet hear the word of the Lord; O Zedekiah, king of Judah, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not die by the sword, but thou shalt die in peace; and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings that were before thee, so shall they burn odors for thee, and they will lament thee, saying, Ah, Lord; for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord."

Now, instead of Zedekiah beholding the eyes of the king of Babylon, and speaking with him mouth to mouth, and dying in peace, and with the burning of odors, as at the funeral of his fathers, (as Jeremiah had declared the Lord himself had pronounced,) the reverse, according to the 52d chapter, was the case; it is there said, (ver. 10,) "That the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death." What then can we say of these prophets, but that they are imposters and liars?

As for Jeremiah, he experienced none of those evils. He was taken into favor by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave him in

charge to the captain of the guard, (chap. xxxix. v. 12,) "Take him (said he) and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Jeremiah joined himself afterwards to Nebuchadnezzar, and went about prophesying for him against the Egyptians, who had marched to the relief of Jerusalem while it was besieged. Thus much for another of the lying prophets, and the book that bears his name.

I have been the more particular in treating of the books ascribed to Isaiah and Jeremiah, because those two are spoken of in the books of Kings and Chronicles, which the others are not. The remainder of the books ascribed to the men called prophets, I shall not trouble myself much about; but take them collectively into the observations I shall offer on the character of the men styled prophets.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have said that the word prophet was the Bible word for poet, and that the flights and metaphors of Jewish poets have been foolishly erected into what are now called prophecies. I am sufficiently justified in this opinion, not only because the books called the prophecies are written in poetical language, but because there is no word in the Bible, except it be the word prophet, that describes what we mean by a poet. I have also said, that the word signifies a performer upon musical instruments, of which I have given some instances; such as that of a company of prophets prophesying with psalteries, with tabrets, with pipes, with harps, etc., and that Saul prophesied with them, 1 Sam. chap. x., ver. 5. It appears from this passage, and from other parts in the book of Samuel, that the word prophet was confined to signify poetry and music, for the person who was supposed to have a visionary insight into concealed things was not a prophet, but a *seer*,* (1 Sam., chap. ix. ver. 9); and it was not till after the word *seer* went out of use (which most probably was when Saul banished those he called wizards) that the profession of the seer, or the art of seeing, became incorporated into the word prophet.

According to the *modern* meaning of the word prophet and prophesying, it signifies foretelling events to a great distance of time; and it became necessary to the inventors of

*I know not what is the Hebrew word that corresponds to the word seer in English, but I observe it is translated into French by La Voyant, from the verb *voir* to *see*, and which means the person who *sees*, or the seer.

the gospel to give it this latitude of meaning, in order to apply or to stretch what they call the prophecies of the Old Testament, to the times of the New; but according to the Old Testament, the prophesying of the seer, and afterwards of the prophet, so far as the meaning of the word seer was incorporated into that of prophet, had reference only to things of the time then passing, or very closely connected with it; such as the event of a battle they were going to engage in, or of a journey, or of any enterprise they were going to undertake, or of any circumstance then pending, or of any difficulty they were then in; all of which had immediate reference to themselves (as in the case already mentioned of Ahaz and Isaiah, with respect to the expression, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*), and not to any distant future time. It was that kind of prophesying that corresponds to what we call fortune-telling; such as casting nativities, predicting riches, fortunate or unfortunate marriages, conjuring for lost goods, etc.; and it is the fraud of the Christian church, not that of the Jews; and the ignorance and the superstition of modern, not that of ancient times, that elevated those poetical, musical, conjuring, dreaming, strolling gentry into the rank they have since had.

But, besides this general character of all the prophets, they had also a particular character. They were in parties, and they prophesied for or against, according to the party they were with; as the poetical and political writers of the present day write in defense of the party they associate with against the other.

After the Jews were divided into two nations, that of Judah and that of Israel, each party had its prophets, who abused and accused each other of being false prophets, lying prophets, impostors, etc.

The prophets of the party of Judah prophesied against the prophets of the party of Israel, and those of the party of Israel against those of Judah. This party prophesying showed itself immediately on the separation under the first two rival kings, Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The prophet that cursed, or prophesied against the altar that Jeroboam had built in Bethel, was of the party of Judah, where Rehoboam was king; and he was waylaid, on his return home, by a prophet of the party of Israel, who said unto

him (1 Kings, chap. x.): "Art thou the man of God that came from Judah? and he said, I am." Then the prophet of the party of Israel said to him, "I am a prophet also, as thou art (signifying of Judah), and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee unto thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water; but (says the 18th verse) he lied unto him." This event, however, according to the story, is, that the prophet of Judah never got back to Judah, for he was found dead on the road, by the contrivance of the prophet of Israel, who, no doubt, was called a true prophet by his own party, and the prophet of Judah a lying prophet.

In the third chapter of the second of Kings, a story is related of prophesying or conjuring, that shows, in several particulars, the character of a prophet. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Joram, king of Israel, had for a while ceased their party animosity, and entered into an alliance; and these two, together with the king of Edom, engaged in a war against the king of Moab. After uniting, and marching their armies, the story says, they were in great distress for water, upon which Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him? and one of the servants of the king of Israel said, Here is Elisha (Elisha was of the party of Judah.) And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah said, The word of the Lord is with him." The story then says, that these three kings went down to Elisha; and when Elisha (who as I have said, was a Judahmite prophet) saw the king of Israel, he said unto him, "What have I to do with thee, get thee to the prophets of thy father and the prophets of thy mother. Nay, but, said the king of Israel, the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hands of the king of Moab," (meaning because of the distress they were it for water;) upon which Elisha said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regarded Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee." Here is all the venom and vulgarity of a party prophet. We have now to see the performance, or manner of prophesying.

Ver. 15: "Bring me," said Elisha, "a minstrel; and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." Here is the farce of the conjuror.

Now for the prophecy: "And Elisha said, (singing most probably to the tune he was playing,) Thus saith the Lord Make this valley full of ditches;" which was just telling them what every countryman could have told them without either fiddle or farce, that the way to get water was to dig for it.

But as every conjuror is not famous alike for the same thing, so neither were those prophets; for though all of them, at least those I have spoken of, were famous for lying, some of them excelled in cursing. Elisha, whom I have just mentioned, was a chief in this branch of prophesying; it was he that cursed the forty-two children in the name of the Lord, whom the two she-bears came and devoured. We are to suppose that those children were of the party of Israel; but as those who will curse will lie, there is just as much credit to be given to this story of Elisha's two she-bears as there is to that of the Dragon of Wantley, of whom it is said,

Poor children three devoured he,
That could not with him grapple;
And at one sup he eat them up,
As a man would eat an apple.

There was another description of men called prophets, that amused themselves with dreams and visions; but whether by night or by day, we know not. These, if they were not quite harmless, were but little mischievous. Of this class are:

Ezekiel and Daniel; and the first question upon those books, as upon all the others, is, are they genuine? that is, were they written by Ezekiel and Daniel?

Of this there is no proof; but so far as my own opinion goes, I am more inclined to believe they were, than that they were not. My reasons for this opinion are as follows: First, Because those books do not contain internal evidence to prove they were not written by Ezekiel and Daniel, as the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, Samuel, etc., etc., prove they were not written by Moses, Joshua, Samuel, etc.

Secondly, Because they were not written till after the Babylonish captivity began; and there is good reason to believe, that not any book in the Bible was written before that period; at least, it is provable, from the books themselves, as I have already shown, that they were not written till after the commencement of the Jewish monarchy.

Thirdly, Because the manner in which the books ascribed

to Ezekiel and Daniel are written, agrees with the condition these men were in at the time of writing them.

Had the numerous commentators and priests, who have foolishly employed or wasted their time in pretending to expound and unriddle those books, been carried into captivity, as Ezekiel and Daniel were, it would have greatly improved their intellects, in comprehending the reason for this mode of writing, and have saved them the trouble of racking their invention, as they have done, to no purpose, for they would have found that themselves would be obliged to write whatever they had to write, respecting their own affairs, or those of their friends, or of their country, in a concealed manner, as those men have done.

These two books differ from all the rest; for it is only these that are filled with accounts of dreams and visions; and this difference arose from the situation the writers were in as prisoners of war, or prisoners of state, in a foreign country, which obliged them to convey even the most trifling information to each other, and all their political projects or opinions, in obscure and metaphorical terms. They pretend to have dreamed dreams, and seen visions, because it was unsafe for them to speak facts or plain language. We ought, however, to suppose, that the persons to whom they wrote, understood what they meant, and that it was not intended anybody else should. But these busy commentators and priests have been puzzling their wits to find out what it was not intended they should know, and with which they have nothing to do.

Ezekiel and Daniel were carried prisoners to Babylon, under the first captivity, in the time of Jehoiakim, nine years before the second captivity in the time of Zedekiah.

The Jews were then still numerous, and had considerable force at Jerusalem; and as it is natural to suppose that men in the situation of Ezekiel and Daniel, would be meditating the recovery of their country, and their own deliverance, it is reasonable to suppose, that the accounts of dreams and visions, with which these books are filled, are no other than a disguised mode of correspondence, to facilitate those objects; it served them as a cypher, or secret alphabet. If they are not this, they are tales, reveries, and nonsense; or, at least, a fanciful way of wearing off the wearisomeness of captivity; but the presumption is, that they were the former.

Ezekiel begins his books by speaking of a vision of *cherubims*, and of a *wheel within a wheel*, which he says he saw by the river Chebar, in the land of his captivity. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that by the cherubims he meant the temple at Jerusalem, where they had figures of cherubims? and by a wheel within a wheel (which, as a figure, has always been understood to signify political contrivance) the project or means of recovering Jerusalem? In the latter part of this book he supposes himself transported to Jerusalem, and into the temple; and he refers back to the vision on the river Chebar, and says (chap. xliii., ver. 3) that this last vision was like the vision on the river Chebar; which indicates, that those pretended dreams and visions had for their object the recovery of Jerusalem, and nothing further.

As to the romantic interpretations and applications, wild as the dreams and visions they undertake to explain, which commentators and priests have made of those books, that of converting them into things which they call prophecies, and making them bend to times and circumstances, as far remote even as the present day, it shows the fraud or the extreme folly to which credulity or priestcraft can go.

Scarcely anything can be more absurd than to suppose that men situated as Ezekiel and Daniel were, whose country was overrun and in the possession of the enemy, all their friends and relations in captivity abroad, or in slavery at home, or massacred, or in continual danger of it; scarcely anything, I say, can be more absurd, than to suppose that such men should find nothing to do but that of employing their time and their thoughts about what was to happen to other nations a thousand or two thousand years after they were dead; at the same time, nothing is more natural than that they should meditate the recovery of Jerusalem and their own deliverance; and that this was the sole object of all the obscure and apparently frantic writing, contained in those books.

In this sense, the mode of writing used in those two books being forced by necessity, and not adopted by choice, is not irrational; but, if we are to use the books as prophecies, they are false. In the 29th chapter of Ezekiel, speaking of Egypt, it is said (ver. 11), "No foot of man should pass through it, nor foot of beast should pass through it; neither shall it be inhabited for forty years." This is what never

came to pass, and consequently it is false, as all the books I have already reviewed are. I here close this part of the subject.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason* I have spoken of Jonah, and of the story of him and the whale. A fit story for ridicule, if it was written to be believed; or of laughter, if it was intended to try what credulity could swallow; for, if it could swallow Jonah and the whale, it could swallow anything.

But, as is already shown in the observations on the book of Job and of Proverbs, it is not always certain which of the books in the Bible are originally Hebrew, or only translations from books of the Gentiles into Hebrew; and, as the book of Jonah, so far from treating of the affairs of the Jews, says nothing upon that subject, but treats altogether of the Gentiles, it is more probable that it is a book of the Gentiles than of the Jews; and that it has been written as a fable, to expose the nonsense and satirize the vicious and malignant character of a Bible prophet or a predicting priest.

Jonah is represented, first, as a disobedient prophet, running away from his mission and taking shelter aboard a vessel of the Gentiles, bound from Joppa to Tarshish; as if he ignorantly supposed, by such a paltry contrivance, he could hide himself where God could not find him. The vessel is overtaken by a storm at sea; and the mariners, all of whom are Gentiles, believing it to be a judgment, on account of some one on board who had committed a crime, agreed to cast lots to discover the offender; and the lot fell upon Jonah. But, before this, they had cast all their wares and merchandise overboard to lighten the vessel, while Jonah, like a stupid fellow, was fast asleep in the hold.

After the lot had designated Jonah to be the offender; they questioned him to know who and what he was? and he told them *he was an Hebrew;* and the story implies that he confessed himself to be guilty. But these Gentiles, instead of sacrificing him at once, without pity or mercy, as a company of Bible prophets or priests would have done by a Gentile in the same case, and as it is related Samuel had done by Agag, and Moses by the women and children, they endeavored to save him, though at the risk of their own lives; for the account says: "Nevertheless (that is, though Jonah

was a Jew and a foreigner, and the cause of all their misfortunes, and the loss of their cargo (the men rowed hard to bring the boat to land, but they could not, for the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them." Still, however, they were unwilling to put the fate of the lot into execution; and they cried (says the account) unto the Lord, saying: "We beseech thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee." Meaning thereby, that they did not presume to judge Jonah guilty, since that he might be innocent; but that they considered the lot that had fallen upon him as a decree of God, or as it *pleased God.* The address of this prayer shows that the Gentiles worshiped one *Supreme Being*, and that they were not idolators as the Jews represented them to be. But the storm still continuing, and the danger increasing, they put the fate of the lot into execution, and cast Jonah into the sea; where, according to the story, a great fish swallowed him up whole and alive.

We have now to consider Jonah securely housed from the storm in the fish's belly. Here we are told that he prayed; but the prayer is a made-up prayer, taken from various parts of the Psalms, without any connection or consistency, and adapted to the distress, but not at all to the condition, that Jonah was in. It is such a prayer as a Gentile, who might know something of the Psalms, could copy out for him. This circumstance alone, were there no other, is sufficient to indicate that the whole is a made-up story. The prayer, however, is supposed to have answered the purpose, and the story goes on, (taking up at the same time the cant language of a Bible prophet,) saying: "*The Lord spake unto the fish*, and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land."

Jonah then received a second mission to Nineveh, with which he sets out; and we have now to consider him as a preacher. The distress he is represented to have suffered, the remembrance of his own disobedience as the cause of it, and the miraculous escape he is supposed to have had, were sufficient, one would conceive, to have impressed him with sympathy and benevolence in the execution of his mission; but, instead of this, he enters the city with denunciation and malediction in his mouth, crying: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

We have now to consider this supposed missionary in the

last act of his mission; and here it is that the malevolent spirit of a Bible-prophet, or of a predicting priest, appears in all that blackness of character that men ascribe to the being they call the devil.

Having published his predictions, he withdrew, says the story, to the east side of the city. But for what? not to contemplate, in retirement, the mercy of his Creator to himself or to others, but to wait, with malignant impatience, the destruction of Nineveh. It came to pass, however, as the story relates, that the Ninevites reformed, and that God, according to the Bible-phrase, repented him of the evil he had said he would do unto them, and did it not. This, saith the first verse of the last chapter, *displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.* His obdurate heart would rather that all Nineveh should be destroyed, and every soul, young and old, perish in its ruins, than that his prediction should not be fulfilled. To expose the character of a prophet still more, a gourd is made to grow up in the night, that promises him an agreeable shelter from the heat of the sun, in the place to which he is retired; and the next morning it dies.

Here the rage of the prophet becomes excessive, and he is ready to destroy himself. "It is better, said he, for me to die than to live." This brings on a supposed expostulation between the Almighty and the prophet; in which the former says, "Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? And Jonah said, I do well to be angry even unto death; then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it to grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than threescore thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?"

Here is both the winding up of the satire, and the moral of the fable. As a satire, it strikes against the character of all the Bible prophets, and against all the indiscriminate judgments upon men, women and children, with which this lying book, the Bible, is crowded; such as Noah's flood, the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the extirpation of the Canaanites, even to sucking infants, and women with child, because the same reflection, *that there are more than three-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left*, meaning young

children, applies to all their cases. It satirizes, also, the supposed partiality of the Creator for one nation more than for another.

As a moral, it preaches against the malevolent spirit of prediction; for, as certainly as a man predicts ill, he becomes inclined to wish it. The pride of having his judgment right hardens his heart, till at last he beholds with satisfaction, or sees with disappointment, the accomplishment or the failure of his predictions. This book ends with the same kind of strong and well-directed point against prophets, prophecies and indiscriminate judgments as the chapter that Benjamin Franklin made for the Bible, about Abraham and the stranger, ends against the intolerant spirit of religious persecution. Thus much for the book Jonah.

Of the poetical parts of the Bible that are called prophecies, I have spoken in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, and already in this, where I have said that the word *prophet* is the Bible word for *poet*, and that the flights and metaphors of those poets, many of which have become obscure by the lapse of time and the change of circumstances, have been ridiculously erected into things called prophecies, and applied to purposes the writers never thought of. When a priest quotes any of those passages, he unriddles it agreeably to his own views, and imposes that explanation upon his congregation as the meaning of the writer. The *Whore of Babylon* has been the common whore of all the priests, and each has accused the other of keeping the strumpet—so well do they agree in their explanations.

There now remain only a few books, which they call books of the lesser prophets; and, as I have already shown that the greater are impostors, it would be cowardice to disturb the repose of the little ones. Let them sleep, then, in the arms of their nurses, the priests, and both be forgotten together.

I have now gone through the Bible, as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder, and fell trees. Here they lie; and the priests, if they can, may replant them. They may, perhaps, stick them in the ground, but they will never make them grow. I pass on to the books of the New Testament.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament, they tell us, is founded upon the prophecies of the Old; if so, it must follow the fate of its foundation.

As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she is married, and that the son she might bring forth should be executed, even unjustly, I see no reason for not believing that such a woman as Mary, and such a man as Joseph, and Jesus, existed; their mere existence is a matter of indifference about which there is no ground either to believe or to disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of *It may be so; and what then?* The probability, however, is that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstance; as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk.

It is not the existence, or non-existence, of the persons that I trouble myself about; it is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and, while under this engagement, she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretense (Luke, chap. i., ver. 35,) that "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Notwithstanding which Joseph afterwards marries her, cohabits with her as his wife, and in his turn rivals the ghost. This is putting the story into intelligible language, and, when told in this manner, there is not a priest but must be ashamed to own it.*

* Mary, the supposed virgin mother of Jesus, had several other children, sons and daughters. See Matt., chap. xlii., 55, 56.

Obscenity in matters of faith, however wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture; for it is necessary to our serious belief in God, that we do not connect it with stories that run, as this does, into ludicrous interpretations. This story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and shows, as is already stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, that the Christian faith is built upon the heathen mythology.

As the historical parts of the New Testament, so far as concerns Jesus Christ, are confined to a very short space of time, less than two years, and all within the same country, and nearly in the same spot, the discordance of time, place and circumstance, which detects the fallacy of the books of the Old Testament, and proves them to be impositions, cannot be expected to be found here in the same abundance. The New Testament compared with the Old, is like a farce of one act, in which there is not room for very numerous violations of the unities. There are, however, some glaring conditions, which, exclusive of the fallacy of the pretended prophecies, are sufficient to show the story of Jesus Christ to be false.

I lay it down as a position which cannot be controverted, first, that the *agreement* of all the parts of a story does not prove that story to be true, because the parts may agree, and the whole may be false; secondly, that the *disagreement* of the parts of a story proves *the whole cannot be true.* The agreement does not prove truth, but the disagreement proves falsehood positively.

The history of Jesus Christ is contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first chapter of Matthew begins with giving a genealogy of Jesus Christ, and in the third chapter of Luke there is given a genealogy of Jesus Christ. Did these two agree, it would not prove the genealogy to be true, because it might, nevertheless, be a fabrication; but as they contradict each other in every particular, it proves falsehood absolutely. If Matthew speaks truth, Luke speaks falsehood; and if Luke speaks truth, Matthew speaks falsehood; and as there is no authority for believing one more than the other, there is no authority for believing either; and if they cannot be believed even in the very first thing they say, and set out to prove, they are not entitled to

be believed in anything they say afterwards. Truth is an uniform thing; and as to inspiration and revelation, were we to admit it, it is impossible to suppose it can be contradictory. Either, then, the men called apostles are impostors, or the books ascribed to them have been written by other persons, and fathered upon them, as is the case with the Old Testament.

The book of Matthew gives, chap. i., ver. 6, a genealogy by name from David, up through Joseph, the husband of Mary, to Christ; and makes there to be *twenty-eight* generations. The book of Luke gives also a genealogy by name from Christ, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, down to David, and makes there to be *forty-three* generations; besides which, there are only the two names of David and Joseph that are alike in the two lists. I here insert both genealogical lists, and for the sake of perspicuity and comparison, have placed them both in the same direction, that is, from Joseph down to David.

Genealogy, according to Matthew.	Genealogy, according to Luke.
Christ.	Christ.
2 Joseph.	2 Joseph.
3 Jacob.	3 Heli.
4 Matthan.	4 Matthat.
5 Eleazer.	5 Levi.
6 Eliud.	6 Melchi.
7 Achim.	7 Janna.
8 Sadoc.	8 Joseph.
9 Azor.	9 Mattathias.
10 Eliakim.	10 Amos.
11 Abiud.	11 Naum.
12 Zorobabel.	12 Esli.
13 Salathiel.	13 Nagge.
14 Jechonias.	14 Maath.
15 Josias.	15 Mattathias.
16 Amon.	16 Semei.
17 Manasses.	17 Joseph.
18 Ezekias.	18 Juda.
19 Achaz.	19 Joanna.
20 Joatham.	20 Rhesa.
21 Ozas.	21 Zorobabel.
22 Joram.	22 Salathiel.
23 Josaphat.	23 Neri.
24 Asa.	24 Melchi.

Genealogy, according to Matthew.	Genealogy, according to Luke.
25 Abia.	25 Addi.
26 Roboam.	26 Cosam.
27 Solomon.	27 Elmodam.
28 David.*	28 Er.
	29 Jose.
	30 Eliezer.
	31 Jorim.
	32 Matthat.
	33 Levi.
	34 Simeon.
	35 Juda.
	36 Joseph.
	37 Jonan.
	38 Elakim.
	39 Melea.
	40 Menan.
	41 Mattatha.
	42 Nathan.
	43 David.

Now, if these men, Matthew and Luke, set out with a falsehood between them (as these two accounts show they do) in the very commencement of their history of Jesus Christ, and of whom, and of what he was, what authority (as I have before asked) is there left for believing the strange things they tell us afterwards? If they cannot be believed in their account of his natural genealogy, how are we to believe them when they tell us he was the son of God, begotten by a ghost, and that an angel announced this in secret to his mother? If they lied in one genealogy, why are we to believe them in the other? If his natural be manufactured, which it certainly is, why are not we to suppose that his celestial genealogy is manufactured also, and that the whole is fabulous? Can any man of serious reflection hazard his future happiness upon the belief of a story naturally impossible, repugnant to every idea of decency,

* From the birth of David to the birth of Christ is upwards of 1080 years, and as the lifetime of Christ is not included, there are but 27 full generations. To find, therefore, the average of each person mentioned in the list at the time his first son was born, it is only necessary to divide 1080 by 27, which gives 40 years for each person. As the lifetime of man was then but of the same extent it is now, it is an absurdity to suppose that 27 following generations should all be old bachelors before they married; and the more so when we are told that Solomon, the next in succession to David, had a house full of wives and mistresses before he was 21 years of age. So far from this genealogy being a solemn truth, it is not even a reasonable lie. The list of Luke gives about 26 years for the average age, and this is too much.

and related by persons already detected of falsehood? Is it not more safe that we stop ourselves at the plain, pure and unmixed belief of one God, which is deism, than that we commit ourselves on an ocean of improbable, irrational, indecent and contradictory tales?

The first question, however, upon the books of the New Testament, as upon those of the Old, is, are they genuine? Were they written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? for it is upon this ground only that the strange things related therein have been credited. Upon this point there is no *direct proof for or against*, and all that this state of a case proves is *doubtfulness*, and doubtfulness is the opposite of belief. The state, therefore, that the books are in proves against themselves, as far as this kind of proof can go.

But, exclusive of this, the presumption is that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and that they are impositions. The disordered state of the history in these four books, the silence of one book upon matters related in the other, and the disagreement that is to be found among them, implies that they are the production of some unconnected individuals, many years after the things they pretend to relate, each of whom made his own legend; and not the writings of men living intimately together, as the men called apostles are supposed to have done; in fine, that they have been manufactured, as the books of the Old Testament have been, by other persons than those whose names they bear.

The story of the angel announcing what the church calls the *immaculate conception* is not so much as mentioned in the books ascribed to Mark and John, and is differently related in Matthew and Luke. The former says the angel appeared to Joseph; the latter says it was to Mary; but either, Joseph or Mary, was the worst evidence that could have been thought of; for it was others that should have testified *for them*, and not they for themselves. Were any girl that is now with child to say, and even to swear it, that she was gotten with child by a ghost, and that an angel told her so, would she be believed? Certainly she would not. Why then are we to believe the same thing of another girl whom we never saw, told by nobody knows who, nor when, nor where? How strange and inconsistent

is it, that the same circumstance that would weaken the belief even of a probable story, should be given as a motive for believing this one, that has upon the face of it every token of absolute impossibility and imposture?

The story of Herod destroying all the children under two years old, belongs altogether to the book of Matthew; not one of the rest mentions anything about it. Had such a circumstance been true, the universality of it must have made it known to all the writers; and the thing would have been too striking to have been omitted by any. This writer tells us, that Jesus escaped this slaughter, because Joseph and Mary were warned by an angel to flee with him into Egpyt; but he forgot to make any provision for John who was then under two years of age. John, however, who staid behind, fared as well as Jesus, who fled; and, therefore, the story circumstantially belies itself.

Not any two of these writers agree in reciting, *exactly in the same words*, the written inscription, short as it is, which they tell us was put over Christ when he was crucified; and besides this, Mark says, He was crucified at the third hour (nine in the morning;) and John says it was the sixth hour, (twelve at noon.*)

The inscription is thus stated in those books:

Matthew—This is Jesus the king of the Jews.
Mark———The king of the Jews.
Luke———This is the king of the Jews.
John———Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews.

We may infer from these circumstances, trivial as they are, that those writers, whoever they were, and in whatever time they lived, were not present at the scene. The only one of the men, called apostles, who appears to have been near the spot, was Peter, and when he was accused of being one of Jesus' followers, it is said, (Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 74) "Then Peter began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man!" yet we are now called upon to believe the same Peter, convicted, by their own account, of perjury. For what reason, or on what authority, shall we do this?

The accounts that are given of the circumstances, that they

*According to John, the sentence was not passed till about the sixth hour, (noon,) and, consequently, the execution could not be till the afternoon; but Mark says expressly, that he was crucified at the third hour (nine in the morning,) chap. xv. 25, John chap. xix. ver. 14.

tell us attended the crucifixion, are differently related in those four books.

The book ascribed to Matthew says, "There was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour—that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that there was an earthquake—that the rocks rent—that the graves opened, that the bodies of many of the saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." Such is the account which this dashing writer of the book of Matthew gives, but in which he is not supported by the writers of the other books.

The writer of the book ascribed to Mark, in detailing the circumstances of the crucifixion, makes no mention of any earthquake, nor of the rocks rending, nor of the graves opening, nor of the dead men walking out. The writer of the book of Luke is silent also upon the same points. And as to the writer of the book of John, though he details all the circumstances of the crucifixion down to the burial of Christ, he says nothing about either the darkness—the veil of the temple—the earthquake—the rocks—the graves nor the dead men.

Now if it had been true, that those things had happened; and if the writers of these books had lived at the time they did happen, and had been the persons they are said to be, namely, the four men called apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, it was not possible for them, as true historians, even without the aid of inspiration, not to have recorded them. The things, supposing them to have been facts, were of too much notoriety not to have been known, and of too much importance not to have been told. All these supposed apostles must have been witnesses of the earthquake, if there had been any; for it was not possible for them to have been absent from it; the opening of the graves and resurrection of the dead men, and their walking about the city is of greater importance than the earthquake. An earthquake is always possible, and natural, and proves nothing; but this opening of the graves is supernatural, and directly in point to their doctrine, their cause, and their apostleship. Had it been true, it would have filled up whole chapters of those books, and been the chosen theme and general chorus of all the writers; but instead of

this, little and trivial things, and mere prattling conversations of, *he said this* and *she said that*, are often tediously detailed, while this most important of all, had it been true, is passed off in a slovenly manner by a single dash of the pen, and that by one writer only, and not so much as hinted at by the rest.

It is an easy thing to tell a lie, but it is difficult to support the lie after it is told. The writer of the book of Matthew should have told us who the saints were that came to life again, and went into the city, and what became of them afterwards, and who it was that saw them; for he is not hardy enough to say that he saw them himself; whether they came out naked and all in natural buff, he-saints and she-saints; or whether they came full dressed, and where they got their dresses; whether they went to their former habitations, and reclaimed their wives, their husbands, and their property, and how they were received; whether they entered ejectments for the recovery of their possessions, or brought actions of *crim. con.* against the rival interlopers; whether they remained on earth, and followed their former occupation of preaching or working; or whether they died again, or went back to their graves alive, and buried themselves.

Strange indeed, that an army of saints should return to life, and nobody know who they were, nor who it was that saw them, and that not a word more should be said upon the subject, nor these saints have anything to tell us! Had it been the prophets who (as we are told) had formerly prophesied of these things, *they* must have had a *great deal* to say. They could have told us everything, and we should have had posthumous prophecies, with notes and commentaries upon the first, a little better, at least, than we have now. Had it been Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, not an unconverted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem. Had it been John the Baptist, and the saints of the time then present, everybody would have known them, and they would have out-preached and out-famed all the other apostles. But, instead of this, these saints are made to pop up, like Jonah's gourd in the night, for no purpose at all but to wither in the morning. Thus much for this part of the story.

The tale of the resurrection follows that of the crucifixion; and in this as well as in that, the writers, whoever they

were, disagree so much, as to make it evident that none of them were there.

The book of Matthew states that when Christ was put in the sepulchre, the Jews applied to Pilate for a watch or a guard to be placed over the sepulchre, to prevent the body being stolen by the disciples; and that, in consequence of this request, the sepulchre *was made sure, sealing the stone* that covered the mouth, and setting a watch. But the other books say nothing about this application, nor about the sealing, nor the guard, nor the watch; and, according to their accounts, there were none. Matthew, however, follows up this part of the story of the guard or the watch with a second part, that I shall notice in the conclusion, as it serves to detect the fallacy of those books.

The book of Matthew continues its account, and says, (chap. xxviii., ver. 1,) that at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn, towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. Mark says it was sun-rising, and John says it was dark. Luke says it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women, that came to the sepulchre; and John states that Mary Magdalene came alone. So well do they agree about their first evidence! they all, however, appear to have known most about Mary Magdalene; she was a woman of large acquaintance, and it was not an ill conjecture that she might be upon the stroll.

The book of Matthew goes on to say, (ver. 2,) "And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it." But the other books say nothing about any earthquake, nor about the angel rolling back the stone, and sitting upon it; and, according to their account, there was no angel sitting there. Mark says the angel was *within* the sepulchre, sitting on the right side. Luke says there were two, and they were both standing up; and John says they were both sitting down, one at the head and the other at the feet.

Matthew says, that the angel that was sitting upon the stone on the outside of the sepulchre, told the two Marys that Christ was risen, and that the women went away quickly. Mark says, that the women, upon seeing the stone rolled away, and wondering at it, went into the sep-

sulchre, and that it was the angel that was sitting within on the right side, that told them so. Luke says it was the two angels that were standing up; and John says it was Jesus Christ himself that told it to Mary Magdalene; and that she did not go into the sepulchre, but only stooped down and looked in.

Now, if the writers of these four books had gone into a court of justice to prove an *alibi*, (for it is of the nature of an *alibi* that is here attempted to be proved, namely, the absence of a dead body by supernatural means,) and had they given their evidence in the same contradictory manner as it is here given, they would have been in danger of having their ears cropped for perjury, and would have justly deserved it. Yet this is the evidence, and these are the books that have been imposed upon the world as being given by divine inspiration, and as the unchangeable word of God.

The writer of the book of Matthew, after giving this account, relates a story that is not to be found in any of the other books, and which is the same I have just before alluded to.

"Now," says he, (that is, after the conversation the women had had with the angel sitting upon the stone,) "behold some of the watch (meaning the watch that he had said had been placed over the sepulchre) came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done; and when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we *slept;* and if this come to the governor's ears we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying (that his disciples stole him away) is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

The expression, *until this day*, is an evidence that the book ascribed to Matthew was not written by Matthew, and that it has been manufactured long after the times and things of which it pretends to treat; for the expression implies a great length of intervening time. It would be inconsistent in us to speak in this manner of anything happening in our own time. To give, therefore, intelligible meaning to the expression, we must suppose a lapse of some generations, at

least, for this manner of speaking carries the mind back to ancient time.

The absurdity, also, of the story is worth noticing; for it shows the writer of the book of Matthew to have been an exceedingly weak and foolish man. He tells a story that contradicts itself in point of possibility; for, though the guard, if there were any, might be made to say that the body was taken away while they were *asleep*, and to give that as a reason for their not having prevented it, that same sleep must also have prevented their knowing how, and by whom it was done; and yet they are made to say that it was the disciples who did it. Were a man to tender his evidence of something that he should say was done, and of the manner of doing it, and of the person who did it, while he was asleep, and could know nothing of the matter, such evidence could not be received; it will do well enough for Testament evidence, but not for anything where truth is concerned.

I come now to that part of the evidence in those books that respects the pretended appearance of Christ after this pretended resurrection.

The writer of the book of Matthew relates that the angel that was sitting on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre said to the two Marys, chap. xxviii., ver. 7: "Behold, Christ is gone before you into Galilee, there ye shall see him; lo, I have told you." And the same writer at the next two verses, (8, 9,) makes Christ himself to speak to the same purpose to these women immediately after the angel had told it to them, and that they ran quickly to tell it to the disciples; and at the 16th verse it is said, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Gallilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; and when they saw him, they worshiped him."

But the writer of the book of John tells us a story very different to this; for he says, chap. xx., ver. 19: "Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, (that is, the same day that Christ is said to have risen,) when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them."

According to Matthew, the eleven were marching to Galilee, to meet Jesus in a mountain, by his own appointment, at the very time when, according to John, they were assem-

bled in another place, and that not by appointment, but in secret, for fear of the Jews.

The writer of the book of Luke contradicts that of Matthew more pointedly than John does; for he says expressly that the meeting was in *Jerusalem*, the evening of the same day that he (Christ) rose, and that the *eleven* were *there*. See Luke, chap. xxiv. ver. 13, 33.

Now, it is not possible, unless we admit these supposed disciples the right of willful lying, that the writer of these books could be any of the eleven persons called disciples; for if, according to Matthew, the eleven went into Galilee to meet Jesus in a mountain by his own appointment, on the same day that he is said to have risen, Luke and John must have been two of that eleven; yet the writer of Luke says expressly, and John implies as much, that the meeting was that same day, in a house in Jerusalem; and, on the other hand, if, according to Luke and John, the *eleven* were assembled in a house in Jerusalem, Matthew must have been one of that eleven; yet Matthew says the meeting was in a mountain in Galilee, and consequently the evidence given in those books destroys each other.

The writer of the book of Mark says nothing about any meeting in Galilee; but he says, chap. xvi. ver. 12; that Christ, after his resurrection, appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked into the country, and that these two told it to the residue, who would not believe them. Luke also tells a story, in which he keeps Christ employed the whole of the day of this pretended resurrection, until the evening, and which totally invalidates the account of going to the mountain in Galilee. He says, that two of them, without saying which two, went that same day to a village called Emmaus, threescore furlongs (seven miles and a half) from Jerusalem, and that Christ, in disguise, went with them, and staid with them unto the evening, and supped with them, and then vanished out of their sight, and re-appeared that same evening at the meeting of the eleven in Jerusalem.

This is the contradictory manner in which the evidence of this pretended re-appearance of Christ is stated; the only point in which the writers agree, is the skulking privacy of that re-appearance; for whether it was in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, it

was still skulking. To what cause then are we to assign this skulking? On the one hand, it is directly repugnant to the supposed or pretended end—that of convincing the world that Christ was risen; and, on the other hand, to have asserted the publicity of it, would have exposed the writers of those books to public detection, and, therefore, they have been under the necessity of making it a private affair.

As to the account of Christ being seen by more than five hundred at once, it is Paul only who says it, and not the five hundred who say it for themselves. It is, therefore, the testimony of but one man, and that too of a man, who did not, according to the same account, believe a word of the matter himself, at the time it is said to have happened. His evidence, supposing him to have been the writer of the 15th chapter of Corinthians, where this account is given, is like that of a man who comes into a court of justice to swear, that what he had sworn before is false. A man may often see reason, and he has, too, always the right of changing his opinion; but this liberty does not extend to matters of fact.

I now come to the last scene, that of the ascension into heaven. Here all fear of the Jews, and of everything else must necessarily have been out of the question: it was that which, if true, was to seal the whole; and upon which the reality of the future mission of the disciples was to rest for proof. Words, whether declarations or promises, that passed in private, either in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, even supposing them to have been spoken, could not be evidence in public; it was therefore necessary that this last scene should preclude the possibility of denial and dispute; and that it should be, as I have stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, as public and as visible as the sun at noon-day: at least it ought to have been as public as the crucifixion is reported to have been. But to come to the point.

In the first place, the writer of the book of Matthew does not say a syllable about it; neither does the writer of the book of John. This being the case, is it possible to suppose that those writers, who affect to be even minute in other matters, would have been silent upon this, had it been true? The writer of the book of Mark passes it off in a careless, slovenly manner, with a single dash of the pen, as if he was

tired of romancing, or ashamed of the story. So also does the writer of Luke. And even between these two, there is not an apparent agreement, as to the place where this final parting is said to have been.

The book of Mark says that Christ appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat; alluding to the meeting of the eleven at Jerusalem: he then states the conversation that he says passed at that meeting; and immediately after says, (as a school-boy would finish a dull story,) "*So then*, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." But the writer of Luke says, that the ascension was from Bethany; that *he* (Christ) *led them out as far as Bethany, and was parted from them there, and was carried up into heaven.* So also was Mahomet: and, as to Moses, the *apostle* Jude says, ver. 9, *That Michael and the devil disputed about his body.* While we believe such fables as these, or either of them, we believe unworthily of the Almighty.

I have now gone through the examination of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; and when it is considered that the whole space of time from the crucifixion to what is called the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all the circumstances are said to have happened nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem; it is, I believe, impossible to find, in any story upon record, so many and such glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods, as are in those books. They are more numerous and striking than I had any expectation of finding, when I began this examination, and far more so than I had any idea of when I wrote the former part of the *Age of Reason.* I had then neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, nor could I procure any. My own situation, even as to existence, was becoming every day more precarious; and as I was willing to leave something behind me upon the subject, I was obliged to be quick and concise. The quotations I then made were from memory only, but they are correct; and the opinions I have advanced in that work are the effect of the most clear and long-established conviction that the Bible and the Testament are impositions upon the world, that the fall of man, the account of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and of his dying to appease the wrath of God, and of salvation by that strange means, are all fabulous

inventions, dishonorable to the wisdom and power of the Almighty—that the only true religion is Deism, by which I then meant, and now mean, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character, or the practice of what are called moral virtues—and that it was upon this only (so far as religion is concerned) that I rested all my hopes of happiness hereafter. So say I now—and so help me God.

But to return to the subject. Though it is impossible, at this distance of time, to ascertain as a fact who were the writers of those four books (and this alone is sufficient to hold them in doubt, and where we doubt we do not believe) it is not difficult to ascertain negatively that they were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed. The contradictions in those books demonstrate two things:

First, that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the matters they relate, or they would have related them without those contradictions; and, consequently, that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles, who are supposed to have been witnesses of this kind.

Secondly, that the writers, whoever they were, have not acted in concerted imposition, but each writer separately and individually for himself, and without the knowledge of the other.

The same evidence that applies to prove the one, applies equally to prove both cases; that is, that the books were not written by the men called apostles, and also that they are not a concerted imposition. As to inspiration, it is altogether out of the question; and we may as well attempt to unite truth and falsehood, as inspiration and contradiction.

If four men are eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses to a scene, they will, without any concert between them, agree as to time and place, when and where that scene happened. Their individual knowledge of the *thing*, each one knowing it for himself, renders concert totally unnecessary; the one will not say it was in a mountain in the country, and the other at a house in town: the one will not say it was at sun-rise, and the other it was dark. For in whatever place it was, at whatever time it was, they know it equally alike.

And, on the other hand, if four men concert a story, they will make their separate relations of that story agree, and

corroborate with each other to support the whole. *That* concert supplies the want of fact in the one case, as the knowledge of the fact supersedes, in the other case, the necessity of a concert. The same contradictions, therefore, that prove there has been no concert, prove, also, that the reporters had no knowledge of the fact, (or rather of that which they relate as a fact,) and detect also the falsehood of their reports. Those books, therefore, have neither been written by the men called apostles, nor by impostors in concert. How then have they been written?

I am not one of those who are fond of believing there is much of that which is called willful lying, or lying originally, except in the case of men setting up to be prophets, as in the Old Testament; for prophesying is lying professionally. In almost all other cases it is not difficult to discover the progress by which even simple supposition, with the aid of credulity, will, in time, grow into a lie, and at last be told as a fact; and, whenever we can find a charitable reason for a thing of this kind, we ought not to indulge a severe one.

The story of Jesus Christ appearing after he was dead, is the story of an apparition, such as timid imaginations can always create in vision, and credulity believe. Stories of this kind had been told of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, not many years before, and they generally have their origin in violent deaths, or in the execution of innocent persons. In cases of this kind, compassion lends its aid, and benevolently stretches the story. It goes on a little and a little further, till it becomes *a most certain truth.* Once start a ghost, and credulity fills up the history of its life, and assigns the cause of its appearance! one tells it one way, another another way, till there are as many stories about the ghost, and about the proprietor of the ghost, as there are about Jesus Christ in these four books.

The story of the appearance of Jesus Christ is told with that strange mixture of the natural and impossible that distinguishes legendary tale from fact. He is represented as suddenly coming in and going out when the doors are shut, and of vanishing out of sight, and appearing again, as one would conceive of an unsubstantial vision; then again he is hungry, sits down to meat, and eats his supper. But as those who tell stories of this kind never provide for all the cases, so it is here; they have told us, that when he arose

he left his grave-clothes behind him; but they have forgotten to provide other clothes for him to appear in afterwards, or tell to us what he did with them when he ascended, whether he stripped all off, or went up clothes and all. In the case of Elijah, they have been careful enough to make him throw down his mantle; how it happened not to be burnt in the chariot of fire they also have not told us. But, as imagination supplies all deficiencies of this kind, we may suppose, if we please, that it was made of salamander's wool.

Those who are not much acquainted with ecclesiastical history may suppose that the book called the New Testament has existed ever since the time of Jesus Christ, as they suppose that the books ascribed to Moses have existed ever since the time of Moses. But the fact is historically otherwise; there was no such book as the New Testament till more than three hundred years after the time that Christ is said to have lived.

At what time the books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John began to appear is altogether a matter of uncertainty. There is not the least shadow of evidence of who the persons were that wrote them, nor at what time they were written; and they might as well have been called by the names of any of the other supposed apostles as by the names they are now called. The originals are not in the possession of any Christian Church existing, any more than the two tables of stone written on, they pretend, by the finger of God, upon Mount Sinai, and given to Moses, are in the possession of the Jews. And even if they were, there is no possibility of proving the handwriting in either case. At the time those books were written there was no printing, and consequently there could be no publication, otherwise than by written copies, which any man might make or alter at pleasure, and call them originals. Can we suppose it is consistent with the wisdom of the Almighty to commit himself and his will to man, upon such precarious means as these, or that it is consistent we should pin our faith upon such uncertainties? We cannot make nor alter, nor even imitate, so much as one blade of grass that he has made, and yet we can make or alter *words of God* as easily as words of man.*

*The former part of the *Age of Reason* has not been published two years, and there is already an expression in it that is not mine. The expression is: *The book*

About three hundred and fifty years after the time that Christ is said to have lived, several writings of the kind I am speaking of were scattered in the hands of divers individuals; and, as the church had begun to form itself into an hierarchy, or church government, with temporal powers, it set itself about collecting them into a code, as we now see them, called *The New Testament.* They decided by vote, as I have before said in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, which of those writings, out of the collection they had made, should be the *word of God*, and which should not. The Rabbins of the Jews had decided, by vote, upon the books of the Bible before.

As the object of the church, as is the case in all national establishments of churches, was power and revenue, and terror the means it used, it is consistent to suppose, that the most miraculous and wonderful of the writings they had collected stood the best chance of being voted. And as to the authenticity of the books, the *vote stands in the place of it;* for it can be traced no higher.

Disputes, however, ran high among the people then calling themselves Christians; not only as to points of doctrine, but as to the authenticity of the books. In the contest between the persons called St. Augustine and Fauste, about the year 400, the latter says, "The books called the Evangelists have been composed long after the times of the apostles, by some obscure men, who, fearing that the world would not give credit to their relation of matters of which they could not be informed, have published them under the names of the apostles; and which are so full of sottishness and discordant relations, that there is neither agreement nor connection between them."

And in another place, adressing himself to the advocates of those books, as being the word of God, he says, "It is thus that your predecessors have inserted in the scriptures of our Lord, many things, which, though they carry his name,

of Luke was carried by a majority of one voice only. It may be true, but it is not I that have said it. Some person who might know the circumstance, has added it in a note at the bottom of the page of some of the editions, printed either in England or in America; and the printers, after that, have erected it into the body of the work, and made me the author of it. If this has happened within such a short space of time, notwithstanding the aid of printing, which prevents the alteration of copies individually, what may not have happened in much greater length of time, when there was no printing, and when any man who could write could make a written copy and call it an original, by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?

agree not with his doctrines. This is not surprising, *since that we have often proved* that these things have not been written by himself, nor by his apostles, but that for the greatest part they are founded upon *tales*, upon *vague reports*, and put together by I know not what, half Jews, with but little agreement between them; and which they have nevertheless published under the names of the apostles of our Lord, and have thus attributed to them their own *errors and their lies.*"*

The reader will see by these extracts, that the authenticity of the books of the New Testament was denied, and the books treated as tales, forgeries, and lies, at the time they were voted to be the word of God. But the interest of the church, with the asistance of the faggot, bore down the opposition, and at last suppressed all investigation. Miracles followed upon miracles, if we will believe them, and men were taught to say they believed, whether they believed or not. But (by way of throwing in a thought) the French Revolution has excommunicated the church from the power of working miracles; she has not been able, with the assistance of all her saints, to work *one* miracle since the revolution began; and as she never stood in greater need than now, we may, without the aid of divination, conclude that all her former miracles were tricks and lies.†

When we consider the lapse of more than three hundred

* I have taken these two extracts from Boulanger's Life of Paul, written in French; Boulanger has quoted them from the writings of Augustine against Fauste, to which he refers.

† Boulanger, in his life of Paul, has collected from the ecclesiastical histories, and the writings of the fathers, as they are called, several matters which show the opinions that prevailed among the different sects of Christians, at the time the Testament, as we now see it, was voted to be the word of God. The following extracts are from the second chapter of that work:

"The Marcionists, (a Christian sect,) assured that the evangelists were filled with falsities. The Manichæus, who formed a very numerous sect at the commencement of Christianity, *rejected as false, all the New Testament;* and showed other writings quite different that they gave for authentic. The Corinthians, like the Marcionists, admitted not the Acts of the Apostles. The Encratites, and the Sevenians, adopted neither the Acts nor the Epistles of Paul. Chrysostom, in a homily which he made upon the Acts of the Apostles, says, that in his time, about the year 400, many people knew nothing either of the author or of the book. St. Irene, who lived before that time, reports that the Valentinians, like several other sects of the Christians, accused the scriptures with being filled with imperfections, errors and contradictions. The Ebionites or Nazarenes, who were the first Christians, rejected all the Epistles of Paul, and regarded him as an impostor. They report, among other things, that he was originally a Pagan, that he came to Jerusalem, where he lived some time; and that having a mind to marry the daughter of the high priest, he caused himself to be circumcised; but that not being able to obtain her, he quarreled with the Jews, and wrote against circumcision, and against the observation of the Sabbath, and against all the legal ordinances."

years intervening between the time that Christ is said to have lived and the time the New Testament was formed into a book, we must see, even without the assistance of historical evidence, the exceeding uncertainty there is of its authenticity. The authenticity of the book of Homer, so far as regards the authorship, is much better established than that of the New Testament, though Homer is a thousand years the most ancient. It was only an exceeding good poet that could have written the book of Homer, and, therefore, few men only could have attempted it; and a man capable of doing it would not have thrown away his own fame by giving it to another. In like manner, there were but few that could have composed Euclid's Elements, because none but an exceeding good geometrician could have been the author of that work.

But, with respect to the books of the New Testament, particularly such parts as tell us of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, any person who could tell a story of an apparition, or of a *man's walking*, could have made such books, for the story is most wretchedly told. The chance, therefore, of forgery in the Testament is millions to one greater than in the case of Homer or Euclid. Of the numerous priests or parsons of the present day, bishops and all, every one of them can make a sermon, or translate a scrap of Latin, especially if it has been translated a thousand times before; but is there any amongst them that can write poetry like Homer, or science like Euclid? The sum total of a parson's learning, with very few exceptions, is *a b ab*, and *hic, hæc, hoc;* and their knowledge of science is three times one is three; and this is more than sufficient to have enabled them, had they lived at the time, to have written all the books of the New Testament.

As the opportunities for forgeries were greater, so, also, was the inducement. A man could gain no advantage by writing under the name of Homer or Euclid; if he could write equal to them, it would be better that he wrote under his own name; if inferior, he could not succeed. Pride would prevent the former, and impossibility the latter. But with respect to such books as compose the New Testament, all the inducements were on the side of forgery. The best-imagined history that could have been made, at the distance of two or three hundred years after the time, could not have

passed for an original under the name of the real writer; the only chance of success lay in forgery, for the church wanted pretense for its new doctrine, and truth and talents were out of the question.

But as it is not uncommon (as before observed) to relate stories of persons *walking* after they are dead, and of ghosts and apparitions of such as have fallen by some violent or extraordinary means; and as the people of that day were in the habit of believing such things, and of the appearance of angels, and also of devils, and of their getting into people's insides, and shaking them like a fit of an ague, and of their being cast out again as if by an emetic—(Mary Magdalene, the book of Mark tells us, had brought up, or been brought to bed of seven devils)—it was nothing extraordinary that some story of this kind should get abroad of the person called Jesus Christ, and become afterwards the foundation of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each writer told the tale as he heard it, or thereabouts, and gave to his book the name of the saint or the apostle whom tradition had given as the eye-witness. It is only upon this ground that the contradiction in those books can be accounted for; and if this be not the case, they are downright impositions, lies and forgeries, without even the apology of credulity.

That they have been written by a sort of half Jews, as the foregoing quotations mention, is discernible enough. The frequent references made to that chief assassin and impostor, Moses, and the two men called prophets, establishes this point; and, on the other hand, the church has complimented the fraud by admitting the Bible and the Testament to reply to each other. Between the Christian Jew and the Christian Gentile, the thing called a prophecy, and the thing prophesied; the type, and the thing typified; the sign, and the thing signified, have been industriously rummaged up, and fitted together like old locks and pick-lock keys. The story foolishly enough told of Eve and the serpent, and naturally enough as to the enmity between men and serpents, (for the serpent always bites about the *heel*, because it cannot reach higher; and the man always knocks the serpent about the *head*, as the most effectual way to prevent its biting;*) this foolish story, I say, has been made into a

*"It shall bruise thy *head*, and thou shalt bruise his *heel*." Genesis, chap. iii., ver. 15.

prophecy, a type, and a promise to begin with; and the lying imposition of Isaiah to Ahaz, *That a virgin shalt conceive and bear a son*, as a sign that Ahaz should conquer, when the event was that he was defeated (as already noticed in the observations on the book of Isaiah,) has been perverted, and made to serve as a winder-up.

Jonah and the whale are almost made into a sign or a type. Jonah is Jesus, and the whale is the grave; for it is said, (and they have made Christ to say it of himself,) Matt., chap. xvii., ver. 40: "For as Jonah was *three days and three nights* in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth." But it happens, awkwardly enough, that Christ, according to their own account, was but one day and two nights in the grave; about 36 hours instead of 72; that is, the Friday night, the Saturday, and the Saturday night; for they say he was up on the Sunday morning by sunrise, or before. But as this fits quite as well as the *bite* and the *kick* in Genesis, or the *virgin* and her *son* in Isaiah, it will pass in the lump of *orthodox* things. Thus much for the historical part of the Testament and its evidences.

Epistles of Paul.—The epistles ascribed to Paul, being fourteen in number, almost fill up the remaining part of the Testament. Whether those epistles were written by the person to whom they are ascribed, is a matter of no great importance, since the writer, whoever he was, attempts to prove his doctrine by argument. He does not pretend to have been witness to any of the scenes told of the resurrection and the ascension, and he declares that he had not believed them.

The story of his being struck to the ground as he was journeying to Damascus, has nothing in it miraculous or extraordinary; he escaped with life, and that is more than many others have done, who have been struck with lightning; and that he should lose his sight for three days, and be unable to eat or drink during that time, is nothing more than is common in such conditions. His companions that were with him appear not to have suffered in the same manner, for they were well enough to lead him the remainder of the journey; neither did they pretend to have seen any vision.

The character of the person called Paul, according to the

account given of him, has in it a great deal of violence and fanaticism; he had persecuted with as much heat as he preached afterwards; the stroke he had received had changed his thinking, without altering his constitution; and, either as a Jew or a Christian, he was the same zealot. Such men are never good moral evidences of any doctrine they preach. They are always in extremes, as well of action as of belief.

The doctrine he sets out to prove by argument, is the resurrection of the same body; and he advances this as an evidence of immortality. But so much will men differ in their manner of thinking, and in the conclusions they draw from the same premises, that this doctrine of the resurrection of the same body, so far from being an evidence of immortality, appears to me to furnish an evidence against it; for if I had already died in this body, and am raised again in the same body in which I have died, it is presumptive evidence that I shall die again. That resurrection no more secures me against the repetition of dying, than an ague-fit, when past, secures me against another. To believe, therefore, in immortality, I must have a more elevated idea than is contained in the gloomy doctrine of the resurrection.

Besides, as a matter of choice, as well as of hope, I had rather have a better body and a more convenient form than the present. Every animal in the creation excels us in something. The winged insects, without mentioning doves or eagles, can pass over more space with greater ease, in a few minutes, than a man can in an hour. The glide of the smallest fish, in proportion to its bulk, exceeds us in motion, almost beyond comparison, and without weariness. Even the sluggish snail can ascend from the bottom of a dungeon, where a man, by the want of that ability, would perish; and a spider can launch itself from the top, as a playful amusement. The personal powers of man are so limited, and his heavy frame so little constructed to extensive enjoyment, that there is nothing to induce us to wish the opinion of Paul to be true. It is too little for the magnitude of the scene—too mean for the sublimity of the subject.

But all other arguments apart, the *consciousness of existence* is the only conceivable idea we can have of another life, and the continuance of that consciousness is immortal-

ity. The consciousness of existence, or the knowing that we exist, is not necessarily confined to the same form, nor to the same matter, even in this life.

We have not in all cases the same form, nor in any case the same matter, that composed our bodies twenty or thirty years ago; and yet we are conscious of being the same persons. Even legs and arms which make up almost half the human frame, are not necessary to the consciousness of existence. These may be lost or taken away, and the full consciousness of existence remain; and were their place supplied by wings, or other appendages, we cannot conceive that it could alter our consciousness of existence. In short, we know not how much, or rather how little, of our composition it is, and how exquisitely fine that little is, that creates in us this consciousness of existence; and all beyond that is like the pulp of a peach, distinct and separate from the vegetative speck in the kernel.

Who can say by what exceeding fine action of fine matter it is that a thought is produced in what we call the mind? and yet that thought when produced, as I now produce the thought I am writing, is capable of becoming immortal, and is the only production of man that has that capacity.

Statues of brass and marble will perish; and statues made in imitation of them are not the same statues, nor the same workmanship, any more than the copy of a picture is the same picture. But print and reprint a thought a thousand times over, and that with materials of any kind—carve it in wood, or engrave it on stone, the thought is eternally and identically the same thought in every case. It has a capacity of unimpaired existence, unaffected by change of matter, and is essentially distinct, and of a nature different from everything else that we know or can conceive. If then the thing produced has in itself a capacity of being immortal, it is more than a token that the power that produced it, which is the self-same thing as consciousness of existence, can be immortal also; and that is independently of the matter it was first connected with, as the thought is of the printing or writing it first appeared in. The one idea is not more difficult to believe than the other, and we can see that one is true.

That the consciousness of existence is not dependent on the same form or the same matter, is demonstrated to our

senses in the works of the creation, as far as our senses are capable of receiving that demonstration. A very numerous part of the animal creation preaches to us, far better than Paul, the belief of a life hereafter. Their little life resembles an earth and a heaven—a present and a future state: and comprises, if it may be so expressed, immortality in miniature.

The most beautiful parts of the creation to our eye are the winged insects, and they are not so originally. They acquire that form, and that inimitable brilliancy by progressive changes. The slow and creeping caterpillar-worm of to-day, passes in a few days to a torpid figure, and a state resembling death; and in the next change comes forth in all the miniature magnificence of life, a splendid butterfly. No resemblance of the former creature remains; everything is changed; all his powers are new, and life is to him another thing. We cannot conceive that the consciousness of existence is not the same in this state of the animal as before; why then must I believe that the resurrection of the same body is necessary to continue to me the consciousness of existence hereafter?

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have called the creation the only true and real word of God; and this instance, of this text, in the book of creation, not only shows to us that this thing may be so, but that it is so; and that the belief of a future state is a rational belief, founded upon facts visible in the creation: for it is no more difficult to believe that we shall exist hereafter in a better state and form than at present, than that a worm should become a butterfly, and quit the dunghill for the atmosphere, if we did not know it as a fact.

As to the doubtful jargon ascribed to Paul in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which makes part of the burial service of some Christian sectaries, it is as destitute of meaning as the tolling of the bell at a funeral; it explains nothing to the understanding—it illustrates nothing to the imagination, but leaves the reader to find any meaning if he can. "All flesh, (says he,) is not the same flesh. There is one flesh of men; another of beasts; another of fishes; and another of birds." And what then?—nothing. A cook could have said as much. "There are also, (says he,) bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; the glory of the celestial is one, and the

glory of the terrestrial is another." And what then? nothing. And what is the difference? nothing that he has told. "There is (says he) one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." And what then?—nothing; except that he says that "one star differeth from another star in glory" instead of distance; and he might as well have told us that, the moon did not shine so bright as the sun. All this is nothing better than the jargon of a conjuror, who picks up phrases he does not understand, to confound the credulous people who come to have their fortunes told. Priests and conjurors are of the same trade.

Sometimes Paul affects to be a naturalist, and to prove his system of resurrection from the principles of vegetation. "Thou fool (says he,) that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." To which one might reply in his own language and say, Thou fool, Paul, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die not; for the grain that dies in the ground never does nor can vegetate. It is only the living grains that produce the next crop. But the metaphor, in any point of view, is no simile. It is succession, and not ressurrection.

The progress of an animal from one state of being to another, as from a worm to a butterfly, applies to this case; but this of a grain does not, and shows Paul to have been what he says of others—a fool.

Whether the fourteen epistles ascribed to Paul were written by him or not is a matter of indifference; they are either argumentative or dogmatical; and as the argument is defective, and the dogmatic part is merely presumptive, it signifies not who wrote them. And the same may be said for the remaining parts of the Testament. It is not upon the epistles, but upon what is called the gospel, contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and upon the pretended prophecies, that the theory of the church, calling itself the Christian Church, is founded. The epistles are dependent upon those, and must follow their fate; for, if the story of Jesus Christ be fabulous, all reasoning founded upon it as a supposed truth, must fall with it.

We know from history that one of the principal leaders of this church, Athanasius, lived at the time of the New Testament was formed;* and we know, also, from the absurd

* , according to the church chronology, in the year 371.

jargon he has left us under the name of a creed, the character of the men who formed the New Testament; and we know, also, from the same history, that the authenticity of the books of which it is composed was denied at the time. It was upon the vote of such as Athanasius that the Testament was decreed to be the word of God; and nothing can present to us a more strange idea than that of decreeing the word of God by vote. Those who rest their faith upon such authority, put man in the place of God, and have no foundation for future happiness; credulity, however, is not a crime, but it becomes criminal by resisting conviction. It is strangling in the womb of the conscience the efforts it makes to ascertain truth. We should never force belief upon ourselves in anything.

I here close the subject on the Old Testament and the New. The evidence I have produced to prove them forgeries is extracted from the books themselves, and acts like a two-edged sword, either way. If the evidence be denied, the authenticity of the scriptures is denied with it; for it is scripture evidence; and if the evidence be admitted, the authenticity of the books is disproved. The contradictory impossibilities contained in the Old Testament and the New put them in the case of a man who swears for and against. Either evidence convicts him of perjury, and equally destroys reputation.

Should the Bible and the Testament hereafter fall, it is not I that have been the occasion. I have done no more than extracted the evidence from that confused mass of matter with which it is mixed, and arranged that evidence in a point of light to be clearly seen and easily comprehended; and, having done this, I leave the reader to judge for himself, as I have judged for myself.

CONCLUSION.

In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have spoken of the three frauds, *mystery*, *miracle*, and *prophecy*; and as I have seen nothing in any of the answers to that work, that in the least affects what I have there said upon those subjects, I shall not encumber this Second Part with additions that are not necessary.

I have spoken also in the same work upon what is called *revelation*, and have shown the absurd misapplication of that term to the books of the Old Testament and the New; for certainly revelation is out of the question in reciting anything of which man has been the actor or the witness. That which a man has done or seen, needs no revelation to tell him he has done it, or seen it; for he knows it already; nor to enable him to tell it, or to write it. It is ignorance, or imposition, to apply the term revelation in such cases; yet the Bible and Testament are classed under this fraudulent description of being all *revelation*.

Revelation, then, so far as the term has relation between God and man, can only be applied to something which God reveals of his *will* to man; but though the power of the Almighty to make such a communication is necessarily admitted, because to that power all things are possible, yet, the thing so revealed (if anything ever was revealed, and which, by the bye, it is impossible to prove) is revelation to the person *only to whom it is made*. His account of it to another is not revelation; and whoever puts faith in that account, puts it in the man from whom the account comes; and that man may have been deceived, or may have dreamed it; or he may be an impostor, and may lie. There is no possible criterion whereby to judge of the truth of what he tells; for even the morality of it would be no proof of revelation. In all such cases the proper answer would be, "When it is revealed to me, I will believe it to be a revela-

tion; but it is not, and cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it to be a revelation before; neither is it proper that I should take the word of man as the word of God, and put man in the place of God." This is the manner in which I have spoken of revelation in the former part of the *Age of Reason*; and which, while it reverentially admits revelation as a possible thing, because, as before said, to the Almighty all things are possible, it prevents the imposition of one man upon another, and precludes the wicked use of pretended revelation.

But though, speaking for myself, I thus admit the possibility of revelation, I totally disbelieve that the Almighty ever did communicate anything to man, by any mode of speech, in any language, or by any kind of vision, or appearance, or by any means which our senses are capable of receiving, otherwise than by the universal display of himself in the works of creation, and by that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions, and disposition to do good ones.

The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonorable belief against the character of the Divinity, the most destructive to morality, and the peace and happiness of man, that ever was propagated since man began to exist. It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such impostor and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth, and have credit among us.

Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations of men, women, and infants, with which the Bible is filled; and the bloody persecutions, and tortures unto death, and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes; whence arose they, but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief, that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament of the other.

Some Christians pretend, that Christianity was not estab-

lished by the sword; but of what period of time do they speak? It was impossible that twelve men could begin with the sword; they had not the power, but no sooner were the professors of Christianity sufficiently powerful to employ the sword than they did so, and the stake and faggot, too; and Mahomet could not do it sooner. By the same spirit that Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (if the story be true), he would have cut off his head, and the head of his master, had he been able. Besides this, Christianity grounds itself originally upon the Bible, and the Bible was established altogether by the sword, and that in the worst use of it; not to terrify, but to extirpate. The Jews made no converts; they butchered all. The Bible is the sire of the Testament, and both are called the *word of God*. The Christians read both books; the ministers preach from both books; and this thing called Christianity is made up of both. It is then false to say that Christianity was not established by the sword.

The only sect that has not persecuted are the Quakers; and the only reason that can be given for it is, that they are rather Deists than Christians. They do not believe much about Jesus Christ, and they call the scriptures a dead letter. Had they called them by a worse name they had been nearer the truth.

It is incumbent on every man who reverences the character of the Creator, and who wishes to lessen the catalogue of artificial miseries, and remove the cause that has sown persecutions thick among mankind, to expel all ideas of revealed religion as a dangerous heresy, and an impious fraud. What is it that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion? Nothing that is useful to man, and everything that is dishonorable to his Maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?—rapine, cruelty, and murder. What is it the Testament teaches us?—to believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married? and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.

As to the fragments of morality that are irregularly and thinly scattered in those books, they make no part of this pretended thing, revealed religion. They are the natural dictates of conscience, and the bonds by which society is held together, and without which it cannot exist; and are

nearly the same in all religions, and in all societies. The Testament teaches nothing new upon this subject, and where it attempts to exceed, it becomes mean and ridiculous. The doctrine of not retaliating injuries, is much better expressed in proverbs, which is a collection as well from the Gentiles as the Jews, than it is in the Testament. It is there said, Proverbs, xxv., ver. 21, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;"* but when it is said, as in the Testament, "If a man smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also," it is assassinating the dignity of forbearance, and sinking man into a spaniel.

Loving enemies is another dogma of feigned morality, and has besides no meaning. It is incumbent on man, as a moralist, that he does not revenge an injury; and it is equally good in a political sense, for there is no end to retaliation, each retaliates on the other and calls it justice; but to love in proportion to the injury, if it could be done, would be to offer a premium for crime. Besides the word enemies is too vague and general to be used in a moral maxim, which ought to be always clear and defined, like a proverb. If a man be the enemy of another through mistake and prejudice, as in the case of religious opinions, and sometimes in politics, that man is different to an enemy at heart with a criminal intention: and it is incumbent upon us, and it contributes to our own tranquillity, that we put the best construction upon a thing that it will bear. But even this erroneous motive in him, makes no motive for love on the other part; and to say that we can love voluntarily, and without a motive, is morally and physically impossible.

Morality is injured by prescribing to it duties, that, in the first place, are impossible to be performed; and, if they could be, would be productive of evil; or, as before said, be

* According to what is called Christ's sermon on the mount, in the book of Matthew where, among some other good things, a good deal of this feigned morality is introduced, it is there expressly said, that the doctrine of forbearance, or of not retaliating injuries, *was not any part of the doctrine of the Jews;* but as this doctrine is founded in proverbs, it must, according to that statement, have been copied from the Gentiles, from whom Christ had learned it. Those men, whom Jewish and Christian idolators have abusively called heathens, had much better and clearer ideas of justice and morality, than are to be found in the Old Testament, so far as it is Jewish; or in the New. The answer of Solon on the question, "Which is the most perfect popular government?" has never been exceeded by any man since his time, as containing a maxim of public morality. "That," says he, "*where the least injury done to the meanest individual, is considered as an insult to the whole constitution.*" Solon lived about 500 years before Christ.

premiums for crime. The maxim *of doing as we would be done unto*, does not include this strange doctrine of loving enemies; for no man expects to be loved himself for his crime or for his enmity.

Those who preach this doctrine of loving their enemies, are in general the greatest persecutors, and they act consistently by so doing; for the doctrine is hypocritical, and it is natural that hypocrisy should act the reverse of what it preaches. For my own part, I disown the doctrine, and consider it as a feigned or fabulous morality; yet the man does not exist that can say I have persecuted him, or any man or any set of men, either in the American Revolution, or in the French Revolution; or that I have, in any case, returned evil for evil. But it is not incumbent on man to reward a bad action with a good one, or to return good for evil; and wherever it is done, it is a voluntary act, and not a duty. It is also absurd to suppose that such doctrine can make any part of a revealed religion. We imitate the moral character of the Creator by forbearing with each other, for he forbears with all; but this doctrine would imply that he loved man, not in proportion as he was good, but as he was bad.

If we consider the nature of our condition here, we must see there is no occasion for such a thing as *revealed religion.* What is it we want to know? Does not the creation, the universe we behold, preach to us the existence of an Almighty power that governs and regulates the whole? And is not the evidence that this creation holds out to our senses infinitely stronger than anything we can read in a book, that any impostor might make and call the word of God? As for morality, the knowledge of it exists in every man's conscience.

Here we are. The existence of an Almighty power is sufficiently demonstrated to us, though we cannot conceive, as it is impossible we should, the nature and manner of its existence. We cannot conceive how we came here ourselves, and yet we know for a fact that we are here. We must know also, that the power that called us into being, can, if he please, and when he pleases, call us to account for the manner in which we have lived here; and, therefore, without seeking any other motive for the belief, it is rational to believe that he will, for we know beforehand that he

can. The probability or even possibility of the thing is all that we ought to know; for if we knew it as a fact, we should be the mere slaves of terror; or belief would have no merit, and our best actions no virtue.

Deism then teaches us, without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known. The creation is the Bible of the Deist. He there reads, in the handwriting of the Creator himself, the certainty of his existence, and the immutability of his power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries. The probability that we may be called to account hereafter, will, to a reflecting mind, have the influence of belief; for it is not our belief or disbelief that can make or unmake the fact. As this is the state we are in, and which is proper we should be in, as free agents, it is the fool only, and not the philosopher, or even the prudent man, that would live as if there were no God.

But the belief of a God is so weakened by being mixed with the strange fable of the Christian creed, and with the wild adventures related in the Bible, and of the obscurity and obscene nonsense of the Testament, that the mind of man is bewildered as in a fog. Viewing all these things in a confused mass, he confounds fact with fable; and as he cannot believe all, he feels a disposition to reject all. But the belief of a God is a belief distinct from all other things and ought not to be confounded with any. The notion of a Trinity of Gods has enfeebled the belief of one God. A multiplication of beliefs acts as a division of belief; and in proportion as anything is divided it is weakened.

Religion, by such means, becomes a thing of form, instead of fact; of notion, instead of principles; morality is banished, to make room for an imaginary thing, called faith, and this faith has its origin in a supposed debauchery; a man is preached instead of God; and execution as an object for gratitude; the preachers daub themselves with the blood, like a troop of assassins, and pretend to admire the brilliancy it gives them; they preach a humdrum sermon on the merits of the execution; then praise Jesus Christ for being executed, and condemn the Jews for doing it.

A man, by hearing all this nonsense lumped and preached together, confounds the God of the creation with the imagined God of the Christians, and lives as if there were none.

Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory in itself, than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince, and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid, or produces only atheists and fanatics. As an engine of power, it serves the purpose of despotism; and as a means of wealth, the avarice of priests; but so far as respects the good of man in general, it leads to nothing here or hereafter.

The only religion that has not been invented, and that has in it every evidence of divine originality, is pure and simple Deism. It must have been the first, and will probably be the last that man believes. But pure and simple Deism does not answer the purpose of despotic governments. They cannot lay hold of religion as an engine, but by mixing it with human inventions, and making their own authority a part; neither does it answer the avarice of priests but by incorporating themselves and their functions with it, and becoming, like the government, a party in the system. It is this that forms the otherwise mysterious connection of church and state; the church humane, and the state tyrannic.

Were man impressed as fully and as strongly as he ought to be with the belief of a God, his moral life would be regulated by the force of that belief; he would stand in awe of God, and of himself, and would not do the thing that could not be concealed from either. To give this belief the full opportunity of force, it is necessary that it act alone. This is Deism.

But when, according to the Christian Trinitarian scheme, one part of God is represented by a dying man, and another part called the Holy Ghost, by a flying pigeon, it is impossible that belief can attach itself to such wild conceits.*

It has been the scheme of the Christian church, and of all the other invented systems of religion, to hold man in ignorance of the Creator, as it is of government to hold man in ignorance of his rights. The systems of the one are as

*The book called the book of Matthew, says, chap. iii. ver. 16, that *the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove.* It might as well have said a goose; the creatures are equally harmless, and the one is as much a nonsensical lie as the other. The second of Acts, ver. 2, 3, says, that it descended in a mighty *rushing wind*, in the shape of *cloven tongues:* perhaps it was cloven feet. Such absurd stuff is only fit for tales of witches and wizards.

false as those of the other, and are calculated for mutual support. The study of theology, as it stands in Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it is founded on nothing; it rests on no principles; it proceeds by no authorities; it has no data; it can demonstrate nothing; and it admits of no conclusion. Not anything can be studied as a science, without our being in possession of the principles upon which it is founded; and as this is not the case with Christian theology, it is therefore the study of nothing.

Instead then of studying theology, as is now done, out of the Bible and Testament, the meanings of which books are always controverted, and the authenticity of which is disproved, it is necessary that we refer to the Bible of the creation. The principles we discover there are eternal, and of divine origin: they are the foundation of all the science that exists in the world, and must be the foundation of theology.

We can know God only through his works. We cannot have a conception of any one attribute, but by following some principle that leads to it. We have only a confused idea of his power, if we have not the means of comprehending something of its immensity. We can have no idea of his wisdom, but by knowing the order and manner in which it acts. The principles of science lead to this knowledge; for the Creator of man is the Creator of science; and it is through that medium that man can see God, as it were, face to face.

Could a man be placed in a situation, and endowed with the power of vision, to behold at one view, and to contemplate deliberately, the structure of the universe; to mark the movements of the several planets, the cause of their varying appearances, the unerring order in which they revolve, even to the remotest comet; their connection and dependence on each other, and to know the system of laws established by the Creator, that governs and regulates the whole; he would then conceive, far beyond what any church theology can teach him, the power, the wisdom, the vastness, the munificence, of the Creator; he would then see, that all the knowledge man has of science, and that all the mechanical arts by which he renders his situation comfortable here, are derived from that source: his mind, exalted by the scene, and convinced by the fact, would increase in gratitude as it increased in knowledge; his religion or his worship would become united with his

improvement as a man; any employment he followed, that had connection with the principles of creation, as every thing of agriculture, of science, and of the mechanical arts, has, would teach him more of God, and of the gratitude he owes to him, than any theological Christian sermon he now hears. Great objects inspire great thoughts; great munificence excites great gratitude; but the groveling tales and doctrines of the Bible and the Testament are fit only to excite contempt.

Though man cannot arrive, at least in this life, at the actual scene I have described, he can demonstrate it; because he has a knowledge of the principles upon which the creation is constructed. We know that the greatest works can be represented in model, and that the universe can be represented by the same means. The same principles by which we measure an inch, or an acre of ground, will measure to millions in extent. A circle of an inch in diameter has the same geometrical properties as a circle that would circumscribe the universe. The same properties of a triangle that will demonstrate upon paper the course of a ship, will do it on the ocean; and when applied to what are called the heavenly bodies, will ascertain to a minute the time of an eclipse, though these bodies are millions of miles distant from us. This knowledge is of divine origin; and it is from the Bible of the creation that man has learned it, and not from the stupid Bible of the church, that teacheth man nothing.*

All the knowledge man has of science and of machinery, by the aid of which his existence is rendered comfortable upon earth, and without which he would be scarcely distinguishable in appearance and condition from a common animal, comes from the great machine and structure of the universe. The constant and unwearied observations of our

* The Bible-makers have undertaken to give us, in the first chapter of Genesis, an account of the creation; and in doing this they have demonstrated nothing but their ignorance. They make there to have been three days and three nights, evenings and mornings, before there was a sun; when it is the presence or absence of a sun that is the cause of day and night—and what is called his rising and setting, that of morning and evening. Besides, it is a puerile and pitiful idea, to suppose the Almighty to say, "Let there be light." It is the imperative manner of speaking that a conjuror uses, when he says to his cups and balls, Presto, be gone—and most probably has been taken from it, as Moses and his rod are a conjuror and his wand. Longinus calls this expression the sublime; and by the same rule the conjuror is sublime too; for the manner of speaking is expressively and grammatically the same. When authors and critics talk of the sublime, they see not how nearly it borders on the ridiculous. The sublime of the critics, like some parts of Edmund Burke's sublime and beautiful, is like a wind-mill just visible in a fog, which imagination might distort into a flying mountain, or an archangel, or a flock of wild geese.

ancestors upon the movements and revolutions of the heavenl bodies, in what are supposed to have been the early ages y the world, have brought this knowledge upon earth. of is not Moses and the prophets, nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles that have done it. The Almighty is the great mechanic of the creation; the first philosopher and original teacher of all science.—Let us, then, learn to reverence our master, and let us not forget the labors of our ancestors.

Had we, at this day, no knowledge of machinery, and were it possible that man could have a view, as I have before described, of the structure and machinery of the universe, he would soon conceive the idea of constructing some at least of the mechanical works we now have: and the idea so conceived would progressively advance in practice. Or could a model of the universe, such as is called an orrery, be presented before him and put in motion, his mind would arrive at the same idea. Such an object and such a subject would, whilst it improved him in knowledge useful to himself as a man and a member of society, as well as entertaining, afford far better matter for impressing him with a knowledge of, and a belief in the Creator, and of the reverence and gratitude that man owes to him, than the stupid texts of the Bible and of the Testament, from which, be the talents of the preacher what they may, only stupid sermons can be preached. If man must preach, let him preach something that is edifying, and from texts that are known to be true.

The Bible of the creation is inexhaustible in texts. Every part of science, whether connected with the geometry of the universe, with the systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy—for gratitude as for human improvement. It will perhaps be said, that if such a revolution in the system of religion takes place, every preacher ought to be a philosopher.—*Most certainly;* and every house of devotion a school of science.

It has been by wandering from the immutable laws of science, and the right use of reason, and setting up an invented thing called revealed religion, that so many wild and blasphemous conceits have been formed of the Almighty. The Jews have made him the assassin of the human species, to make room for the religion of the Jews. The Christians have made him the murderer of himself, and the founder of

a new religion, to supersede and expel the Jewish religion. And to find pretense and admission for these things, they must have supposed his power and his wisdom imperfect, or his will changeable; and the changeableness of the will is the imperfection of the judgment. The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why, then, is it supposed they have changed with respect to man?

I here close the subject. I have shown in all the foregoing parts of this work that the Bible and Testament are impositions and forgeries; and I leave the evidence I have produced in proof of it to be refuted, if any one can do it; and I leave the ideas that are suggested in the conclusion of the work to rest on the mind of the reader; certain as I am, that when opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail.

AN

EXAMINATION

OF THE

PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

QUOTED FROM THE OLD,

AND CALLED

PROPHECIES CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST,

TOGETHER WITH

A REPLY TO THE BISHOP OF LLANDAFF,

A LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE,

AND

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

PREFACE.

TO THE MINISTERS AND PREACHERS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS OF RELIGION.

It is the duty of every man, as far as his ability extends, to detect and expose delusion and error. But nature has not given to every one a talent for the purpose; and among those to whom such a talent is given, there is often a want of disposition or of courage to do it.

The world, or more properly speaking, that small part of it called Christendom, or the Christian World, has been amused for more than a thousand years with accounts of Prophecies in the Old Testament, about the coming of the person called Jesus Christ, and thousands of sermons have been preached, and volumes written, to make man believe it.

In the following treatise I have examined all the passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and I find no such thing as a prophecy of any such person, and I deny there are any. The passages all relate to circumstances the Jewish nation was in at the time they were written or spoken, and not to anything that was or was not to happen in the world several hundred years afterwards; and I have shown what the circumstances were, to which the passages apply or refer. I have given chapter and verse for everything I have said, and have not gone out of the books of the Old and New Testament for evidence that the passages are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ.

The prejudice of unfounded belief, often degenerates into the prejudice of custom, and becomes, at last, rank hypocrisy. When men, from custom or fashion, or any worldly motive, profess or pretend to believe what they do not believe, nor can give

any reason for believing, they unship the helm of their morality, and being no longer honest to their own minds, they feel no moral difficulty in being unjust to others. It is from the influence of this vice, hypocrisy, that we see so many Church and Meeting-going professors and pretenders to religion, so full of trick and deceit in their dealings, and so loose in the performance of their engagements, that they are not to be trusted further than the laws of the country will bind them. Morality has no hold on their minds, no restraint on their actions.

One set of preachers make salvation to consist in believing. They tell their congregations, that if they believe in Christ, their sins shall be forgiven. This, in the first place, is an encouragement to sin, in a similar manner as when a prodigal young fellow is told his father will pay all his debts, he runs into debt the faster, and becomes more extravagant: Daddy, says he, pays all, and on he goes. Just so in the other case, *Christ pays all*, and on goes the sinner.

In the next place, the doctrine these men preach is not true. The New Testament rests itself for credulity and testimony on what are called prophecies in the Old Testament, of the person called Jesus Christ; and if there are no such things as prophecies of any such person in the Old Testament, the New Testament is a forgery of the councils of Nice and Laodicea, and the faith founded thereon, delusion and falsehood.*

Another set of preachers tell their congregations that God predestinated and selected from all eternity, a certain number to be saved, and a certain number to be damned eternally. If this were true, *the day of Judgment* IS PAST: *their preaching* is in vain, and they had better work at some useful calling for their livelihood.

---

* The councils of Nice and Laodicea were held about 350 years after the time Christ is said to have lived; and the books that now compose the New Testament, were then voted for by YEAS and NAYS, as we now vote a law. A great many that were offered had a majority of *nays*, and were rejected. This is the way the New Testament came into being.

This doctrine, also, like the former, hath a direct tendency to demoralize mankind. Can a bad man be reformed by telling him, that if he is one of those who was decreed to be damned before he was born, his reformation will do him no good; and if he was decreed to be saved, he will be saved whether he believes it or not; for this is the result of the doctrine. Such preaching, and such preachers, do injury to the moral world. They had better be at the plow.

As in my political works my motive and object have been to give man an elevated sense of his own character, and free him from the slavish and superstitious absurdity of monarchy and hereditary government, so in my publications on religious subjects my endeavors have been directed to bring man to a right use of the reason that God has given him; to impress on him the great principles of divine morality, justice, mercy, and a benevolent disposition to all men, and to all creatures, and to inspire in him a spirit of trust, confidence and consolation in his Creator, unshackled by the fables of books pretending to be *the word of God*.

THOMAS PAINE.

EXAMINATION

OF THE

PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT,

QUOTED FROM THE OLD, AND CALLED PROPHECIES OF THE COMING OF

JESUS CHRIST.

[This work was first published by Mr. Paine, at New York, in 1807, and was the last of his writings, edited by himself. It is evidently extracted from his answer to the Bishop of Llandaff, or from his third part of the "Age of Reason," both of which, it appears by his will, he left in manuscript. The term, "*The Bishop*," occurs in this examination six times without designating what bishop is meant. Of all the replies to his second part of the "Age of Reason," that of Bishop Watson was the only one to which he paid particular attention; and he is, no doubt, the person here alluded to. Bishop Watson's apology for the Bible had been published some years before Mr. P. left France, and the latter composed his answer to it, and also his third part of the "Age of Reason," while in that country.

When Mr. Paine arrived in America, and found that liberal opinions on religion were in disrepute, through the influence of hypocrisy and superstition, he declined publishing the entire of the works which he had prepared; observing that "An author might lose the credit he had acquired by writing too much." He however gave to the public the examination before us, in a pamphlet form. But the apathy which appeared to prevail at that time in regard to religious inquiry, fully determined him to discontinue the publication of his theological writings. In this case, taking only a portion of one of the works before mentioned, he chose a title adapted to the particular part selected.]

The Passages called Prophecies of, or concerning, Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament, may be classed under the two following heads:—

First, those referred to in the four books of the New Testa-

ment, called the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Secondly, those which translators and commentators have, of their own imagination, erected into prophecies, and dubbed with that title at the head of the several chapters of the Old Testament. Of these it is scarcely worth while to waste time, ink and paper upon; I shall, therefore, confine myself chiefly to those referred to in the aforesaid four books of the New Testament. If I show that these are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ, nor have reference to any such person, it will be perfectly needless to combat those which translators, or the Church, have invented, and for which they had no other authority than their own imagination

I begin with the book called the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

In the first chap ver 18, it is said, "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was in this wise: when his Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together* SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD BY THE HOLY GHOST."—This is going a little too fast, because to make this verse agree with the next it should have said no more than that *she was found with child;* for the next verse says, "*Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*"—Consequently Joseph had found out no more than that she was with child, and he knew it was not by himself.

V. 20. "*And while he thought of these things* (that is, whether he should put her away privily, or make a public example of her) *behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him* IN A DREAM (that is, Joseph *dreamed* that an angel appeared unto him), *saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins.*"

Now, without entering into any discussion upon the merits or demerits of the account here given, it is proper to observe, that it has no higher authority than that of a dream; for it is impossible for a man to behold anything in a dream, but that which he dreams of. I ask not, therefore whether Joseph (if there was such a man) had such a dream or not; because admitting he had, it proves nothing. So wonderful and rational is the faculty of the mind in dreams, that it acts the part of

all the characters its imagination creates, and what it thinks it hears from any of them, is no other than what the roving rapidity of its own imagination invents. It is, therefore, nothing to me what Joseph dreamed of; whether of the fidelity or infidelity of his wife.—I pay no regard to my own dreams, and I should be weak indeed to put faith in the dreams of another.

The verses that follow those I have quoted, are the words of the writer of the book of Matthew "*Now* (says he), *all this* (that is, all this dreaming and this pregnancy) *was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying,*

"*Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us.*"

This passage is in Isaiah, chap. vii ver 14, and the writer of the book of Matthew endeavors to make his readers believe that this passage is a prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. It is no such thing—and I go to show it is not. But it is first necessary that I explain the occasion of these words being spoken by Isaiah; the reader will then easily perceive, that so far from their being a prophecy of Jesus Christ, they have not the least reference to such a person, or anything that could happen in the time that Christ is said to have lived—which was about seven hundred years after the time of Isaiah The case is this:

On the death of Solomon the Jewish nation split into two monarchies: one called the kingdom of Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem; the other the kingdom of Israel, the capital of which was Samaria The kingdom of Judah followed the line of David, and the kingdom of Israel that of Saul; and these two rival monarchies frequently carried on fierce wars against each other.

At the time Ahaz was king of Judah, which was in the time of Isaiah, Pekah was king of Israel; and Pekah joined himself to Rezin, king of Syria, to make war against Ahaz, king of Judah; and these two kings marched a confederated and powerful army against Jerusalem Ahaz and his people became alarmed at the danger, and "*their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*" Isaiah, chap. vii ver. 3.

In this perilous situation of things, Isaiah addressed himself to Ahaz, and assures him, in the name of the Lord (the cant

phrase of all the prophets), that these two kings should not succeed against him, and, to assure him that this should be the case (the case was however directly contrary*), tells Ahaz to ask a sign of the Lord. This Ahaz declined doing, giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who pretends to be sent from God, says, ver 14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, *behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*—Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good—For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings"—meaning the king of Israel and the king of Syria, who were marching against him.

Here then is the sign, which was to be the birth of a child, and that child a son, and here also is the time limited for the accomplishment of the sign, namely, before the child should know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

The thing, therefore, to be a sign of success to Ahaz, must be something that would take place before the event of the battle then pending between him and the two kings could be known. A thing to be a sign must precede the thing signified. The sign of rain must be before the rain.

It would have been mockery and insulting nonsense for Isaiah to have assured Ahaz as a sign, that these two kings should not prevail against him: that a child should be born seven hundred years after he was dead; and that before the child so born should know to refuse the evil and choose the good, he, Ahaz, should be delivered from the danger he was then immediately threatened with.

But the case is, that the child of which Isaiah speaks was *his own child*, with which his wife or his mistress was then pregnant; for he says in the next chapter, v. 2, "*And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah; and I went unto the prophetess, and*

---

* Chron. chap. xxviii. ver 1st. *Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord.*—ver. 5. *Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hands of the king of Syria, and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captive and brought them to Damascus; and he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.*

Ver. 6. *And Pekah (king of Israel) slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day.*—ver. 8. *And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters.*

she conceived and bare a son;" and he says, at ver. 18 of the same chapter, "*Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*"

It may not be improper here to observe, that the word translated *a virgin* in Isaiah, does not signify a virgin in Hebrew, but merely a *young woman.* The tense also is falsified in the translation. Levi gives the Hebrew text of the 14th ver. of the 6th chap. of Isaiah, and the translation in English with it—"*Behold a young woman is with child and beareth a son.*" The expression, says he, is in the present tense. This translation agrees with the other circumstances, related of the birth of this child, which was to be a sign to Ahaz. But as the true translation could not have been imposed upon the world as a prophecy of a child to be born seven hundred years afterwards, the Christian translators have falsified the original: and instead of making Isaiah to say, behold a *young woman* is with child and *beareth* a son—they make him to say, behold a *virgin shall* conceive and *bear* a son. It is, however, only necessary for a person to read the 7th and 8th chapters of Isaiah, and he will be convinced that the passage in question is no prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. I pass on to the second passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. ii. ver. 1. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem—saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod, the king, heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him—and when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born—and they said unto him in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet—*and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, art not the least among the Princes of Judea, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.*" This passage is in Micah, chap. 5. ver. 2.

I pass over the absurdity of seeing and following a star in the day-time, as a man would a *Will with the wisp*, or a candle and lantern at night; and also that of seeing it in the east, when they themselves came from the east; for could such a thing be seen at all to serve them for a guide, it must be in the west to

them. I confine myself solely to the passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

The book of Micah, in the passage above quoted, chap. v. ver. 2, is speaking of some person without mentioning his name from whom some great achievements were expected; but the description he gives of this person at the 5th verse, proves evidently that it is not Jesus Christ, for he says at the 5th ver. "and *this man* shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise up war against him (that is, against the Assyrian) seven shepherds and eight principal men—v. 6. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod on the entrance thereof: thus shall *He* (the person spoken of at the head of the second verse) deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

This is so evidently descriptive of a military chief, that it cannot be applied to Christ without outraging the character they pretend to give us of him. Besides which the circumstances of the times here spoken of, and those of the times in which Christ is said to have lived, are in contradiction to each other. It was the Romans, and not the Assyrians, that had conquered and *were in the land* of Judea, and *trod in their palaces* when Christ was born, and when he died, and so far from his driving them out, it was they who signed the warrant for his execution, and he suffered under it.

Having thus shown that this is no prophecy of Jesus Christ, I pass on to the third passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of him.

This, like the first I have spoken of, is introduced by a dream. Joseph dreameth another dream, and dreameth that he seeth another angel. The account begins at the 13th v. of 2nd chap. of Matthew.

"The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: For Herod will seek the life of the young child to destroy him. When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt—and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt I have called my son.*"

This passage is in the book of Hosea, chap. xi. ver. 1. The

words are, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and *called my son out of Egypt*—As they called them, so they went from them, they sacrificed unto Balaam and burnt incense to graven images."

This passage, falsely called a prophecy of Christ, refers to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards. To make it apply to Jesus Christ, he must then be the person who *sacrificed unto Baalam and burnt incense to graven images*, for the person called out of Egypt by the collective name, Israel, and the persons committing this indolatry, are the same persons, or the descendants from them. This, then, can be no prophecy of Jesus Christ, unless they are willing to make an idolater of him. I pass on to the fourth passage, called, a prophecy by the writer of the book of Matthew.

This is introduced by a story told by nobody but himself, and scarcely believed by anybody, of the slaughter of all the children under two years old, by the command of Herod. A thing which it is not probable should be done by Herod, as he only held an office under the Roman government, to which appeals could always be had, as we see in the case of Paul.

Matthew, however, having made or told his story, says, chap. ii. v. 17.—"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying,—*In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.*"

This passage is in Jeremiah chap. xxxi. ver. 15, and this verse when separated from the verses before and after it, and which explains its application, might, with equal propriety, be applied to every case of wars, sieges and other violences, such as the Christians themselves have often done to the Jews, where mothers have lamented the loss of their children. There is nothing in the verse, taken singly, that designates or points out any particular application of it, otherwise than it points to some circumstances which, at the time of writing it, had already happened, and not to a thing yet to happen, for the verse is in the preter or past tense. I go to explain the case and show the application of the verse.

Jeremiah lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged, took, plundered and destroyed Jerusalem, and led the Jews captive to Babylon. He carried his violence against the Jews to every extreme. He slew the sons of King Zedekiah, before his

face, he then put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and kept him in prison till the day of his death.

It is of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking. Their temple was destroyed, their land desolated, their nation and government entirely broken up, and themselves, men, women and children, carried into captivity. They had too many sorrows of their own, immediately before their eyes, to permit them, or any of their chiefs, to be employing themselves on things that might, or might not, happen in the world seven hundred years afterwards.

It is, as already observed, of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking in the verse in question. In the two next verses, the 16th and 17th, he endeavors to console the sufferings by giving them hopes, and according to the fashion of speaking in those days, assurances from the Lord, that their sufferings should have an end, and that *their children should return again to their own children.* But I leave the verses to speak for themselves, and the Old Testament to testify against the New.

Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. ver. 15.—"Thus saith the Lord, a voice *was* heard in Ramah (it is in the preter tense), lamentation and bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children because they were not."

Verse 16.—"Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, said the Lord, *and* THEY *shall come again from the land of the enemy.*"

Verse 17.—"And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that *thy children shall come again to their own border.*"

By what strange ignorance or imposition is it, that the children of which Jeremiah speaks (meaning the people of the Jewish nation, scripturally called *children of Israel*, and not mere infants under two years old), and who were to return again from the land of the enemy, and come again into their own borders, can mean the children that Matthew makes Herod to slaughter? Could those return again from the land of the enemy, or how can the land of the enemy be applied to them? Could they come again to their own borders? Good heavens! How has the world been imposed upon by Testament-makers, priestcraft, and pretended prophecies. I pass on to the fifth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

This, like two of the former, is introduced by dream. Joseph

dreamed another dream, and dreameth of another Angel. And Matthew is again the historian of the dream and the dreamer. If it were asked how Matthew could know what Joseph dreamed, neither the Bishop nor all the Church could answer the question. Perhaps it was Matthew that dreamed, and not Joseph; that is, Joseph dreamed by proxy, in Matthew's brain, as they tell us Daniel dreamed for Nebuchadnezzar. But be this as it may, I go on with my subject.

The account of this dream is in Matthew, chap. ii. ver. 19. —"But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and its mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding being warned of God in a *dream* (here is another dream), he turned aside into the parts of Galilee; and he came and dwelt in a city called *Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*"

Here is good circumstantial evidence that Matthew dreamed, for there is no such passage in all the Old Testament; and I invite the bishop and all the priests in Christendom, including those of America, to produce it. I pass on to the sixth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

This, as Swift says on another occasion, is *lugged in head and shoulders.* It need only to be seen in order to be hooted as a forced and far-fetched piece of imposition.

Matthew, chap. iv. v. 12. "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee—and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim—That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, *The land of Zebulon and the land of Nepthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles —the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is springing upon them.*"

I wonder Matthew has not made the cris-cross-row, or the christ-cross-row (I know not how the priests spell it) into a prophecy. He might as well have done this as cut out these un-

connected and undescriptive sentences from the place they stand in and dubbed them with that title.

The words, however, are in Isaiah, chap. ix. verses 1, 2, as follows:—

"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted *the land of Zebulon and the land of Nephthali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.*"

All this relates to two circumstances that had already happened, at the time these words in Isaiah were written. The one, where the land of Zebulon and Nephthali had been lightly afflicted, and afterwards more grievously by the way of the sea.

But observe, reader, how Matthew has falsified the text. He begins his quotation at a part of the verse where there is not so much as a comma, and thereby cuts off everything that relates to the first affliction. He then leaves out all that relates to the second affliction, and by this means leaves out everything that makes the verse intelligible, and reduces it to a senseless skeleton of names and towns.

To bring this imposition of Matthew clearly and immediately before the eye of the reader, I will repeat the verse, and put between crotchets the words he has left out, and put in Italics those he has preserved.

[Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted] *the land of Zebulon and the land of Nephthali,* [and did afterwards more grievously afflict her] *by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.*"

What gross imposition is it to gut, as the phrase is, a verse in this manner, render it perfectly senseless, and then puff it off on a credulous world as a prophecy. I proceed to the next verse.

Ver. 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." All this is historical, and not in the least prophetical. The whole is in the preter tense: it speaks of things that *had been accomplished* at the time the words were written, and not of things to be accomplished afterwards.

As then the passage is in no possible sense prophetical, nor intended to be so, and that to attempt to make it so, is not only

to falsify the original, but to commit a criminal imposition; it is a matter of no concern to us, otherwise than as curiosity, to know who the people were of which the passage speaks, that sat in darkness, and what the light was that shined in upon them.

If we look into the preceding chapter, the 8th, of which the 9th is only a continuation, we shall find the writer speaking, at the 19th verse, of "*witches and wizards who peep about and mutter*," and of people who made application to them; and he preaches and exhorts them against this darksome practice. It is of this people, and of this darksome practice, or *walking in darkness*, that he is speaking at the 2nd verse of the 9th chapter; and with respect to *the light that had shined in upon them*, it refers entirely to his own ministry, and to the boldness of it, which opposed itself to that of *the witches and wizards who peeped about and muttered.*

Isaiah is, upon the whole, a wild disorderly writer, preserving in general no clear chain of perception in the arrangement of his ideas, and consequently producing no defined conclusions from them. It is the wildness of his style, the confusion of his ideas, and the ranting metaphors he employs, that have afforded so many opportunities to priestcraft in some cases, and to superstition in others, to impose those defects upon the world as prophecies of Jesus Christ. Finding no direct meaning in them, and not knowing what to make of them, and supposing at the same time they were intended to have a meaning, they supplied the defect by inventing a meaning of their own, and called it his. I have, however, in this place done Isaiah the justice to rescue him from the claws of Matthew, who has torn him unmercifully to pieces; and from the imposition or ignorance of priests and commentators, by letting Isaiah speak for himself.

If the words *walking in darkness*, and *light breaking in*, could in any case be applied prophetically, which they cannot be, they would better apply to the times we now live in than to any other. The world has "*walked in darkness*" for eighteen hundred years, both as to religion and government, and it is only since the American Revolution began that light has broken in. The belief of *one God*, whose attributes are revealed to us in the book or scripture of the creation, which no human hand can counterfeit or falsify, and not in the written or printed book which, as Matthew has shown, can be altered or falsified by ignorance or design, is now making its way among us; and as to government, *the light is already gone forth*, and whilst men

ought to be careful not to be blinded by the excess of it, as at a certain time in France, when everything was Robespierrean violence, they ought to reverence, and even to adore it, with all the firmness and perseverance that true wisdom can inspire.

I pass on to the seventh passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. viii. ver. 16. "When the evening was come, they brought unto him (Jesus) many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirit with his word, and healed all that were sick,—That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, *himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*"

This affair of people being possessed by devils, and of casting them out, was the fable of the day when the books of the New Testament were written. It had not existence at any other time. The books of the Old Testament mention no such thing; the people of the present day know of no such thing; nor does the history of any people or country speak of such a thing. It starts upon us all at once in the book of Matthew, and is altogether an invention of the New Testament-makers and the Christian church. The book of Matthew is the first book where the word *Devil* is mentioned.* We read in some of the books of the Old Testament of things called familiar spirits, the supposed companions of people called witches and wizards. It was no other than the trick of pretended conjurors to obtain money from credulous and ignorant people, or the fabricated charge of superstitious malignancy against unfortunate and decrepit old age

But the idea of a familiar spirit, if we can affix any idea to the term, is exceedingly different to that of being possessed by a devil. In the one case, the supposed familiar spirit is a dexterous agent, that comes and goes and does as he is bidden; in the other, he is a turbulent roaring monster, that tears and tortures the body into convulsions. Reader, whoever thou art, put thy trust in thy Creator, make use of the reason he endowed thee with, and cast from thee all such fables.

The passage alluded to by Matthew, for as a quotation it is false, is in Isaiah, chap. liii. ver. 4, which is as follows:

"Surely *he* (the person of whom Isaiah is speaking) *hath borne* our griefs and carried our sorrows." It is in the preter tense.

* The word *devil* is a personification of the word *evil*.

Here is nothing about casting out devils, nor curing of sickness. The passage, therefore, so far from being a prophecy of Christ, is not even applicable as a circumstance.

Isaiah, or at least the writer of the book that bears his name, employs the whole of this chapter, the 53rd, in lamenting the sufferings of some deceased person, of whom he speaks very pathetically. It is a monody on the death of a friend; but he mentions not the name of the person, nor gives a circumstance of him by which he can be personally known; and it is this silence, which is evidence of nothing, that Matthew has laid hold of to put the name of Christ to it; as if the chiefs of the Jews, whose sorrows were then great, and the times they lived in big with danger, were never thinking about their own affairs, nor the fate of their own friends, but were continually running a wild-goose chase into futurity.

To make a monody into a prophecy is an absurdity. The characters and circumstances of men, even in different ages of the world, are so much alike, that what is said of one may with propriety be said of many; but this fitness does not make the passage into a prophecy; and none but an impostor or a bigot would call it so.

Isaiah, in deploring the hard fate and loss of his friend, mentions nothing of him but what the human lot of man is subject to. All the cases he states of him, his persecutions, his imprisonment, his patience in suffering, and his perseverance in principle, are all within the line of nature: they belong exclusively to none, and may with justness be said of many. But if Jesus Christ was the person the church represents him to be, that which would exclusively apply to him, must be something that could not apply to any other person; something beyond the line of nature; something beyond the lot of mortal man; and there are no such expressions in this chapter nor any other chapter in the Old Testament.

It is no exclusive description to say of a person, as is said of the person Isaiah is lamenting in this chapter. *He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.*" This may be said of thousands of persons, who have suffered oppressions and unjust death with patience, silence and perfect resignation.

Grotius, whom the bishop esteems a most learned man, and who certainly was so, supposes that the person of whom Isaiah

is speaking, is Jeremiah. Grotius is led into this opinion, from the agreement there is between the description given by Isaiah, and the case of Jeremiah, as stated in the book that bears his name. If Jeremiah was an innocent man, and not a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem was besieged his case was hard; he was accused by his countrymen, was persecuted, oppressed, and imprisoned, and he says of himself (see Jeremiah, chap. ii. ver. 19), "*But as for me, I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter.*"

I should be inclined to the same opinion with Grotius, had Isaiah lived at the same time when Jeremiah underwent the cruelties of which he speaks; but Isaiah died about fifty years before; and it is of a person of his own time, whose case Isaiah is lamenting in the chapter in question, and which imposition and bigotry, more than seven hundred years afterwards, perverted into a prophecy of a person they call Jesus Christ.

I pass on to the eighth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. xii. ver. 14. "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him—But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself; and great numbers followed him and he healed them all—and he charged them that they should not make him known; That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying,

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased, I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles—he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets—a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he sends forth judgment unto victory—and in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

In the first place, this passage hath not the least relation to the purpose for which it is quoted.

Matthew says that the Pharisees held a council against Jesus to destroy him—that Jesus withdrew himself—that great numbers followed him—that he healed them—and that he charged them they should not make him known.

But the passage Matthew has quoted as being fulfilled by these circumstances, does not so much as apply to any one of them. It has nothing to do with the Pharisees holding a council to destroy Jesus—with his withdrawing himself—with great numbers following him—with his healing them—nor with his charging them not to make him known.

The purpose for which the passage is quoted and the passage itself, are as remote from each other, as nothing from something. But the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament with their eyes shut and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy. The all-wise Creator has been dishonored by being made the author of fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it.

In this passage as in that last mentioned, the name of the person of whom the passage speaks is not given, and we are left in the dark respecting him. It is this defect in the history, that bigotry and imposition have laid hold of to call it prophecy.

Had Isaiah lived in the time of Cyrus, the passage would descriptively apply to him. As king of Persia, his authority was great among the Gentiles, and it is of such a character the passage speaks; and his friendship for the Jews whom he liberated from captivity, and who might then be compared to a *bruised reed*, was extensive. But this description does not apply to Jesus Christ, who had no authority among the Gentiles; and as to his own countrymen, figuratively described by the bruised reed, it was they who crucified him. Neither can it be said of him that he did not cry, and that his voice was not heard in the street. As a preacher it was his business to be heard, and we are told that he travelled about the country for that purpose. Matthew has given a long sermon, which (if his authority is good, but which is much to be doubted since he imposes so much,) Jesus preached to a multitude upon a mountain, and it would be a quibble to say that a mountain is not a street, since it is a place equally as public.

The last verse in the passage (the 4th) as it stands in Isaiah, and which Matthew has not quoted, says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for his law." This also applies to Cyrus. He was not discouraged, he did not fail, he conquered all Babylon, liberated the Jews, and established laws. But this cannot be said of Jesus Christ, who in the passage before us, according to Matthew, withdrew himself for fear of the Pharisees, and charged the people that followed him not to make it known where he was; and who, according to other parts of the Testa-

ment, was continually moving from place to place to avoid being apprehended.*

But it is immaterial to us, at this distance of time, to know who the person was: it is sufficient for the purpose I am upon, that of detecting fraud and falsehood, to know who it was not, and to show it was not the person called Jesus Christ.

I pass on to the ninth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. xxi. v. 1. "And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying unto them, go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, loose them and bring them

---

* In the second part of the "Age of Reason," I have shown that the book ascribed to Isaiah is not only miscellaneous as to matter but as to authorship; that there are parts in it which could not be written by Isaiah, because they speak of things one hundred and fifty years after he was dead. The instance I have given of this, in that work, corresponds with the subject I am upon, *at least a little better than Matthew's introduction and his quotation.*

Isaiah lived, the latter part of his life, in the time of Hezekiah, and it was about one hundred and fifty years, from the death of Hezekiah to the first year of the reign of Cyrus, when Cyrus published a proclamation which is given in the first chapter of the book of Ezra, for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. It cannot be doubted, at least it ought not to be doubted, that the Jews would feel an affectionate gratitude for this act of benevolent justice, and it is natural they would express that gratitude in the customary style, bombastical and hyperbolical as it was, which they used on extraordinary occasions, and which was, and still is in practice with all the eastern nations.

The instance to which I refer, and which is given in the second part of the "Age of Reason," is the last verse of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th—in these words: "*That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.*"

This complimentary address is in the present tense, which shows that the things of which it speaks were in existence at the time of writing it; and consequently that the author must have been at least one hundred and fifty years later than Isaiah, and that the book which bears his name is a compilation. The Proverbs called Solomon's, and the Psalms called David's, are of the same kind. The two last verses of the second book of Chronicles, and the three first verses of the first chapter of Ezra, are word for word the same; which show that the compilers of the Bible mixed the writings of different authors together, and put them under some common head.

As we have here an instance in the 44th and 45th chapters of the introduction of the name of Cyrus into a book to which it cannot belong, it affords good ground to conclude, that the passage in the 42nd chapter, in which the character of Cyrus is given without his name, has been introduced in like manner, and that the person there spoke of is Cyrus.

unto me—and if any man say ought to you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them.

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*"

Poor ass! let it be some consolation amidst all thy sufferings, that if the heathen world erected a bear into a constellation, the Christian world has elevated thee into a prophecy.

This passage is in Zechariah, chap. ix. ver. 9, and is one of the whims of friend Zechariah to congratulate his countrymen, who were then returning from captivity in Babylon, and himself with them, to Jerusalem. It has no concern with any other subject. It is strange that apostles, priests, and commentators, never permit, or never suppose, the Jews to be speaking of their own affairs. Everything in the Jewish books is perverted and distorted into meanings never intended by the writers. Even the poor ass must not be a Jew-ass but a Christian-ass. I wonder they did not make an apostle of him, or a bishop, or at least make him speak and prophesy. He could have lifted up his voice as loud as any of them.

Zechariah, in the first chapter of his book, indulges himself in several whims on the joy of getting back to Jerusalem. He says at the 8th verse, "I saw by night (Zechariah was a sharp-sighted seer) and behold a man setting on a *red horse* (yes, reader, a *red horse*), and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were *red horses speckled and white.*" He says nothing about green horses nor blue horses, perhaps because it is difficult to distinguish green from blue by night, but a Christian can have no doubt they were there, because "*faith is the evidence of things not seen.*"

Zechariah then introduces an angel among his horses, but he does not tell us what color the angel was of, whether black or white, nor whether he came to buy horses, or only to look at them as curiosities, for certainly they were of that kind. Be this however as it may, he enters into conversation with this angel on the joyful affair of getting back to Jerusalem, and he saith at the 16th verse, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord *I am returned* to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem." An expression signifying the rebuilding of a city.

All this, whimsical and imaginary as it is, sufficiently proves that it was the entry of the Jews into Jerusalem from captivity, and not the entry of Jesus Christ, seven hundred years afterwards, that is the subject upon which Zechariah is always speaking.

As to the expression of riding upon an ass, which commentators represent as a sign of humility in Jesus Christ, the case is, he never was so well mounted before. The asses of those countries are large and well-proportioned, and were anciently the chief of riding animals. Their beasts of burden, and which served also for the conveyance of the poor, were camels and dromedaries. We read in Judges, chap. x. ver. 4, that "Jair (one of the Judges of Israel) had thirty sons that rode on thirty *ass-colts*, and they had thirty cities." But commentators distort everything.

There is besides very reasonable grounds to conclude that this story of Jesus riding publicly into Jerusalem, accompanied, as it is said at the 8th and 9th verses, by a great multitude, shouting and rejoicing, and spreading their garments by the way, is altogether a story destitute of truth.

In the last passage called a prophecy that I examined, Jesus is represented as withdrawing, that is, running away, and concealing himself for fear of being apprehended, and charging the people that were with him not to make him known. No new circumstance had arisen in the interim to change his condition for the better; yet here he is represented as making his public entry into the same city from which he had fled for safety. The two cases contradict each other so much, that if both are not false, one of them at least can scarcely be true. For my own part, I do not believe there is one word of historical truth in the whole book. I look upon it at best to be a romance, the principal personage of which is an imaginary or allegorical character founded upon some tale, and in which the moral is in many parts good, and the narrative part very badly and blunderingly written.

I pass on to the tenth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 51. "And behold one of them which was with Jesus (meaning Peter) stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take

the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be. In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

This loose and general manner of speaking, admits neither of detection nor of proof. Here is no quotation given, nor the name of any Bible author mentioned, to which reference can be had.

There are, however, some high improbabilities against the truth of the account.

First—It is not probable that the Jews, who were then a conquered people, and under subjection to the Romans, should be permitted to wear swords.

Secondly—If Peter had attacked the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, he would have been immediately taken up by the guard that took up his master and sent to prison with him.

Thirdly—What sort of disciples and preaching apostles must those of Christ have been that wore swords?

Fourthly—This scene is represented to have taken place the same evening of what is called the Lord's supper, which makes, according to the ceremony of it, the inconsistency of wearing swords the greater.

I pass on to the eleventh passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. xxvii. ver. 3. "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the thirty pieces of silver, and departed, and went and hanged himself—And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood—And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in—Wherefore that field is called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which

was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

This is a most barefaced piece of imposition. The passage in Jeremiah which speaks of the purchase of a field, has no more to do with the case to which Matthew applies it, than it has to do with the purchase of lands in America. I will recite the whole passage:

Jeremiah, chap. xxxii. v. 6. "And Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying—Behold Hanamiel, the son of Shallum thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, buy thee my field that is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is thine to buy it—So Hanamiel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, buy my field I pray thee that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew this was the word of the Lord—And I bought the field of Hanamiel mine uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver—and I subscribed the evidence and sealed it, and took witnesses and weighed him the money in balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open—and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maasaeiath, in the sight of Hanamiel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison—and I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days—for thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, houses, and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed again in this land."

I forbear making any remark on this abominable imposition of Matthew. The thing glaringly speaks for itself. It is priests and commentators that I rather ought to censure, for having preached falsehood so long, and kept people in darkness with respect to those impositions. I am not contending with these men upon points of doctrine, for I know that sophistry has al-

ways a city of refuge. I am speaking of facts: for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion, and the doctrine raised upon it not true. Ah, reader, put thy trust in thy Creator, and thou wilt be safe! but if thou trustest to the book called the scriptures, thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood. But I return to my subject.

There is, among the whims and reveries of Zechariah, mention made of thirty pieces of silver given to a potter. They can hardly have been so stupid as to mistake a potter for a field: and if they had, the passage in Zechariah has no more to do with Jesus, Judas, and the field to bury strangers in, than that already quoted. I will recite the passage.

Zechariah, chap. xi. ver. 7. "And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock; and I took unto me two staves; the one I called *Beauty*, and the other I called *Bands*, and I fed the flock—Three shepherds also, I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.—Then said I, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.—And I took my staff, even *Beauty*, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.—And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock who waited upon me, knew that it was the word of the Lord.

"And I said unto them, if ye think good give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price *thirty pieces of silver*. And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the *potter*, a goodly price that I was prized at of them; and I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

"Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even *Bands*, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."*

* Whiston, in his Essay on the Old Testament, says, that the passage of Zechariah of which I have spoken, was in the copies of the Bible of the first century, in the book of Jeremiah, from whence, says he, it was taken and inserted without coherence, in that of Zechariah—well, let it be so, it does not make the case a whit the better for the New Testament; but it makes the case a great deal the worse for the old. Because it shows as I have mentioned respecting some passages in a book ascribed to Isaiah, that the works of different authors have been so mixed and confounded together, they cannot now be discriminated, except where they are historical, chronological, or biographical, as in the interpolation in Isaiah. It is the name of Cyrus inserted where it could not be inserted, as he was not in existence till

There is no making either head or tail of this incoherent gibberish. His two staves, one called *Beauty* and the other *Bands*, is so much like a fairy tale, that I doubt if it had any other origin.—There is, however, no part that has the least relation to the case stated in Matthew; on the contrary, it is the reverse of it. Here the *thirty pieces* of silver, whatever it was for, is called a *goodly price*, it was as much as the thing was worth, and according to the language of the day, was approved of by the Lord, and the money given to the potter in the house of the Lord. In the case of Jesus and Judas, as stated in Matthew, the thirty pieces of silver were the price of blood; the transaction was condemned by the Lord, and the money when refunded, was refused admittance into the Treasury. Everything in the two cases is the reverse of each other.

Besides this, a very different and direct contrary account to that of Matthew, is given of the affair of Judas, in the book called the *Acts of the Apostles*, according to that book, the case is, that so far from Judas repenting and returning the money, and the high priest buying a field with it to bury strangers in, Judas kept the money and bought a field with it for himself; and instead of hanging himself, as Matthew says, he fell headlong and burst asunder—some commentators endeavor to get over one part of the contradiction by ridiculously supposing that Judas hanged himself first and the rope broke.

Acts, chap. i. ver. 16. "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the

---

one hundred and fifty years after the time of Isaiah, that detects the interpolation and the blunder with it.

Whiston was a man of great literary learning, and what is of much higher degree, of scientific learning. He was one of the best and most celebrated mathematicians of his time, for which he was made professor of mathematics of the University of Cambridge. He wrote so much in defence of the Old Testament, and of what he calls prophecies of Jesus Christ, that at last he began to suspect the truth of the Scriptures, and wrote against them; for it is only those who examine them, that see the imposition. Those who believe them most, are those who know least about them.

Whiston, after writing so much in defence of the Scriptures, was at last prosecuted for writing against them. It was this that gave occasion to Swift, in his ludicrous epigram on Ditton and Whiston, each of which set up to find out the longitude, to call the one *good master Ditton* and the other *wicked Will Whiston*. But as Swift was a great associate with the Freethinkers of those days such as Bollingbroke, Pope, and others, who did not believe the book called the scriptures, there is no certainty whether he wittily called him *wicked* for defending the scriptures, or for writing against them. The known character of Swift decides for the former.

mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was a guide to them that took Jesus. (David says not a word about Judas,) ver. 17, for he (Judas) was numbered among us and obtained part of our ministry."

Ver. 18 "*Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and his bowels gushed out.*" Is it not a species of blasphemy to call the New Testament *revealed religion*, when we see in it such contradictions and absurdities.

I pass on to the twelfth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

Matthew, chap. xxvii. ver. 35. "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*" This expression is in the 22nd Psalm, ver. 18. The writer of that Psalm (whoever he was, for the Psalms are a collection and not the work of one man) is speaking of himself and his own case, and not that of another He begins this Psalm with the words which the New Testament writers ascribed to Jesus Christ. "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*"—words which might be uttered by a complaining man without any great impropriety, but very improperly from the mouth of a reputed God.

The picture which the writer draws of his own situation in this Psalm, is gloomy enough. He is not prophecying, but complaining of his own hard case. He represents himself as surrounded by enemies, and beset by persecutions of every kind; and by way of showing the inveteracy of his persecutors, he says, at the 18th verse, "*They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*" The expression is in the present tense; and is the same as to say, they pursue me even to the clothes upon my back, and dispute how they shall divide them; besides, the word *vesture* does not always mean clothing of any kind, but *property*, or rather the admitting a man to, or *investing* him with property; and as it is used in this Psalm distinct from the word garment, it appears to be used in this sense. But Jesus had no property; for they make him say of himself, "*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*"

But be this as it may, if we permit ourselves to suppose the Almighty would condescend to tell, by what is called the spirit

of prophecy, what could come to pass in some future age of the world, it is an injury to our own faculties, and to our ideas of his greatness, to imagine that it would be about an old coat, or an old pair of breeches, or about anything which the common accidents of life, or the quarrels that attend it, exhibit every day.

That which is in the power of man to do, or in his will not to do, is not a subject for prophecy, even if there were such a thing, because it cannot carry with it any evidence of divine power, or divine interposition: The ways of God are not the ways of men. That which an almighty power performs, or wills, is not within the circle of human power to do, or to control. But any executioner and his assistants might quarrel about dividing the garments of a sufferer, or divide them without quarrelling, and by that means fulfil the thing called a prophecy or set it aside.

In the passage before examined, I have exposed the falsehood of them. In this I exhibit its degrading meanness, as an insult to the Creator and an injury to human reason.

Here end the passages called prophecies by Matthew.

Matthew concludes his book by saying, that when Christ expired on the cross, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the bodies of many of the saints arose; and Mark says, there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour until the ninth. They produce no prophecy for this; but had these things been facts, they would have been a proper subject for prophecy, because none but an almighty power could have inspired a foreknowledge of them, and afterwards fulfilled them. Since then there is no such prophecy, but a pretended prophecy of an old coat, the proper deduction is, there were no such things, and that the book of Matthew is fable and falsehood.

I pass on to the book called the Gospel according to St. Mark.

THE BOOK OF MARK.

THERE are but few passages in Mark called prophecies, and but few in Luke and John. Such as there are I shall examine, and also such other passages as interfere with those cited by Matthew.

Mark begins his book by a passage which he puts in the shape of a prophecy. Mark, chap. i. verse 1.—"The begin-

ning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God—As it is written in the prophets, *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee.*" Malachi, chap. iii. verse 1. The passage in the original is in the first person. Mark makes this passage to be a prophecy of John the Baptist, said by the Church to be a forerunner of Jesus Christ. But if we attend to the verses that follow this expression, as it stands in Malachi, and to the first and fifth verses of the next chapter, we shall see that this application of it is erroneous and false.

Malachi having said, at the first verse, "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me," says, at the second verse, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."

This description can have no reference to the birth of Jesus Christ, and consequently none to John the Baptist. It is a scene of fear and terror that is here described, and the birth of Christ is always spoken of as a time of joy and glad tidings.

Malachi, continuing to speak on the same subject, explains in the next chapter what the scene is of which he speaks in the verses above quoted, and whom the person is whom he calls the messenger.

"Behold," says he, chap. iv. verse 1, "the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day cometh that shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Verse 5. "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

By what right, or by what imposition or ignorance Mark has made Elijah into John the Baptist, and Malachi's description of the day of judgment into the birthday of Christ, I leave to the Bishop to settle.

Mark, in the second and third verses of his first chapter, confounds two passages together, taken from different books of the Old Testament. The second verse, "Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before me," is taken, as I have said before, from Malachi. The third verse, which says, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight," is not in Malachi, but in Isaiah, chap. xl. verse 3. Whiston says that both of these verses were originally in Isaiah. If so, it is

another instance of the disordered state of the Bible, and corroborates what I have said with respect to the name and description of Cyrus being in the book of Isaiah, to which it cannot chronologically belong.

The words in Isaiah, chap. xl. verse 3, "*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight,*" are in the present tense, and consequently not predictive. It is one of those rhetorical figures which the Old Testament authors frequently used. That it is merely rhetorical and metaphorical, may be seen at the 6th verse. "And the voice said, cry; and he said, what shall I cry? *All flesh is grass.*" This is evidently nothing but a figure, for flesh is not grass otherwise than as a figure or metaphor, where one thing is put for another. Besides which, the whole passage is too general and declamatory to be applied exclusively to any particular person or purpose.

I pass on to the eleventh chapter.

In this chapter, Mark speaks of Christ riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he does not make it the accomplishment of a prophecy, as Matthew has done; for he says nothing about a prophecy. Instead of which he goes on the other tack, and in order to add new honors to the ass, he makes it to be a miracle; for he says, ver. 2, it was "*a colt whereon never man sat;*" signifying thereby that as the ass had not been broken, he consequently was inspired *into good manners*, for we do not hear that he kicked Jesus Christ off. There is not a word about his kicking in all the four Evangelists.

I pass on from these feats of *horsemanship*, performed upon a jack-ass, to the 15th chapter.

At the 24th verse of this chapter, Mark speaks of *parting Christ's garments and casting lots upon them*, but he applies no prophecy to it as Matthew does. He rather speaks of it as a thing then in practice with executioners, as it is at this day.

At the 28th verse of the same chapter, Mark speaks of Christ being crucified between two thieves; that, says he, "*the scriptures might be fulfilled which saith, and he was numbered with the transgressors.*" The same thing might be said of the thieves.

This expression is in Isaiah, chap. liii. ver. 12—Grotius applies it to Jeremiah. But the case has happened so often in the world, where innocent men have been numbered with transgressors, and is still continually happening, that it is absurdity to call it a prophecy of any particular person. All those whom

the church call martyrs were numbered with transgressors. All the honest patriots who fell upon the scaffold in France, in the time of Robespierre, were numbered with transgressors; and if himself had not fallen, the same case, according to a note in his own handwriting, had befallen me; yet I suppose the bishop will not allow that Isaiah was prophesying of Thomas Paine.

These are all the passages in Mark which have any reference to prophecies.

Mark concludes his book by making Jesus say to his disciples, chap. xvi. ver. 15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned (fine Popish stuff this), and these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now, the bishop, in order to know if he has all this saving and wonder-working faith, should try those things upon himself. He should take a good dose of arsenic, and if he please, I will send him a rattle-snake from America! As for myself, as I believe in God and not at all in Jesus Christ, nor in the books called the scriptures, the experiment does not concern me.

I pass on to the book of Luke.

There are no passages in Luke called prophecies, excepting those which relate to the passages I have already examined.

Luke speaks of Mary being espoused to Joseph, but he makes no references to the passage in Isaiah, as Matthew does. He speaks also of Jesus riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he says nothing about a prophecy. He speaks of John the Baptist, and refers to the passage in Isaiah of which I have already spoken.

At the 13th chapter, verse 31, he says, "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him (Jesus) get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee—and he said unto them, go ye and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

Matthew makes Herod to die whilst Christ was a child in Egypt, and makes Joseph to return with the child on the news of Herod's death, who had sought to kill him. Luke makes Herod to be living, and to seek the life of Jesus after Jesus

was thirty years of age: for he says, chap. iii. v. 23, "And Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph."

The obscurity in which the historical part of the New Testament is involved with respect to Herod, may afford to priests and commentators a plea, which to some may appear plausible, but to none satisfactory, that the Herod of which Matthew speaks, and the Herod of which Luke speaks, were different persons. Matthew calls Herod a king; and Luke, chap. iii. v. 1, calls Herod Tetrarch (that is, Governor) of Galilee. But there could be no such person as *a king Herod*, because the Jews and their country were under the dominion of the Roman Emperors who governed them by Tetrarchs or Governors.

Luke, chap. ii. makes Jesus to be born when Cyrenius was Governor of Syria, to which government Judea was annexed, and according to this, Jesus was not born in the time of Herod. Luke says nothing about Herod seeking the life of Jesus when he was born; nor of his destroying the children under two years old; nor of Joseph fleeing with Jesus into Egypt: nor of his returning from thence. On the contrary, the book of Luke speaks as if the person it calls Christ had never been out of Judea, and that Herod sought his life after he commenced preaching, as is before stated. I have already shown that Luke, in the book called the Acts of the Apostles (which commentators ascribe to Luke), contradicts the account in Matthew, with respect to Judas and the thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says, that Judas returned the money, and that the high priests bought with it a field to bury strangers in. Luke says, that Judas kept the money, and bought a field with it for himself.

As it is impossible the wisdom of God should err, so it is impossible those books should have been written by divine inspiration. Our belief in God, and his unerring wisdom, forbids us to believe it. As for myself, I feel religiously happy in the total disbelief of it.

There are no other passages called prophecies in Luke than those I have spoken of. I pass on to the book of John.

THE BOOK OF JOHN.

John, like Mark and Luke, is not much of a prophecy-monger. He speaks of the ass, and the casting lots for Jesus' clothes, and some other trifles, of which I have already spoken.

John makes Jesus to say, chap. v. ver. 46, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me." The book of the Acts, in speaking of Jesus, says, chap. iii. ver. 22, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

This passage is in Deuteronomy, chap. xviii. ver. 15. They apply it as a prophecy of Jesus. What imposition! The person spoken of in Deuteronomy, and also in Numbers, where the same person is spoken of, is *Joshua*, the minister of Moses, and his immediate successor, and just such another Robespierrean character as Moses is represented to have been. The case, as related in those books, is as follows:—

Moses was grown old and near to his end, and in order to prevent confusion after his death, for the Israelites had no settled system of government, it was thought best to nominate a successor to Moses while he was yet living. This was done, as we are told, in the following manner:

Numbers, chap. xxvii. ver. 12. "And the Lord said unto Moses, get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel—and when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother is gathered, ver. 15. And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation—Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in. that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep that have no shepherd—And the Lord said unto Moses, take thee *Joshua*, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him—and set him before Eleazar, the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight—and thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient—ver. 22, and Moses did as the Lord commanded, and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid hands upon him, and gave him charge as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses."

I have nothing to do, in this place, with the truth, or the conjuration here practised, of raising up a successor to Moses like unto himself. The passage sufficiently proves it is Joshua,

and that it is an imposition in John to make the case into a prophecy of Jesus. But the prophecy-mongers were so inspired with falsehood, that they never speak truth.*

I pass to the last passage in these fables of the Evangelists called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

John, having spoken of Jesus expiring on the cross between two thieves, says, chap. xix. verse 32, "Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first (meaning one of the thieves) and of the other which was crucified with him But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs—verse 36, for these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken.*"

The passage here referred to is in Exodus, and has no more to do with Jesus than with the ass he rode upon to Jerusalem; —nor yet so much, if a roasted jack-ass, like a roasted he-goat, might be eaten at a Jewish passover. It might be some consolation to an ass to know that though his bones might be picked they would not be broken. I go to state the case.

---

* Newton, Bishop of Bristol in England, published a work in three volumes, entitled, "Dissertations on the Prophecies." The work is tediously written and tiresome to read. He strains hard to make every passage into a prophecy that suits his purpose—Among others, he makes this expression of Moses, "the Lord shall raise thee up a prophet like unto me," into a prophecy of Christ, who was not born, according to the Bible chronologies, till fifteen hundred and fifty-two years after the time of Moses, whereas it was an immediate successor to Moses, who was then near his end, that is spoken of in the passage above quoted.

This Bishop, the better to impose this passage on the world as a prophecy of Christ, has entirely omitted the account in the book of Numbers which I have given at length, word for word, and which shows, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the person spoken of by Moses, is Joshua, and no other person.

Newton is but a superficial writer. He takes up things upon *hearsay*, and inserts them without either examination or reflection, and the more extraordinary and incredible they are, the better he likes them.

In speaking of the walls of Babylon (volume the first, page 263), he makes a quotation from a traveller of the name of *Tavernur*, whom he calls (by way of giving credit to what he says), *a celebrated traveller*, that those walls *were made of burnt brick, ten feet square and three feet thick.* If Newton had only thought of calculating the weight of such a brick, he would have seen the impossibility of their being used or even made. A brick ten feet square, and three feet thick, contains three hundred cubic feet, and allowing a cubic foot of brick to be only one hundred pounds, each of the Bishop's bricks would weigh thirty thousand pounds; and it would take about thirty cart loads of clay (one-horse carts) to make one brick.

But his account of the stones used in the building of Solomon's temple, (volume 2nd, page 211), far exceeds his bricks of ten feet square in the walls of Babylon; these are but brick-bats compared to them.

The stones (says he) employed in the foundation, were in magnitude forty

The book of Exodus, in instituting the Jewish passover, in which they were to eat a he-lamb or a he-goat, says, chap xii. verse 5, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it from the *sheep* or from the *goats*."

The book, after stating some ceremonies to be used in killing and dressing it (for it was to be roasted, not boiled), says, ver. 43, "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof; but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh thereof abroad out of the house; *neither shalt thou break a bone thereof*."

We here see that the case as it stands in Exodus is a ceremony and not a prophecy, and totally unconnected with Jesus' bones, or any part of him.

John, having thus filled up the measure of apostolic fable,

---

cubits, that is, above sixty feet, a cubit, says he, being somewhat more than one foot and a half (a cubit is one foot nine inches), and the superstructure (says this Bishop) was worthy of such foundations. There were some stones, says he, of the whitest marble, forty-five cubits long, five cubits high, and six cubits broad. These are the dimensions this Bishop has given, which in measure of twelve inches to a foot, is 78 feet 9 inches long, 10 feet 6 inches broad, and 8 feet 3 inches thick, and contains 7,234 cubic feet. I now go to demonstrate the imposition of this Bishop.

A cubic foot of water weighs sixty-two pounds and a half. The specific gravity of marble to water is as 2 1-2 is to one. The weight, therefore, of a cubic foot of marble is 556 pounds, which, multiplied by 7,234, the number of cubic feet in one of these stones, makes the weight of it to be 1,128,504 pounds, which is 503 tons. Allowing then a horse to draw about half a ton, it will require a thousand horses to draw one such stone on the ground; how then were they to be lifted into the building by human hands?

The Bishop may talk of faith removing mountains, but all the faith of all the Bishops that ever lived could not remove one of those stones and their bodily strength given in.

The Bishop also tells of *great guns* used by the Turks at the taking of Constantinople, one of which, he says, was drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and by two thousand men. Vol. 3rd, page 117.

The weight of a cannon that carries a ball of 43 pounds, which is the largest cannon that are cast, weighs 8,000 pounds, about three tons and a half, and may be drawn by three yoke of oxen. Anybody may now calculate what the weight of the Bishop's great gun must be, that required seventy yoke of oxen to draw it. This Bishop beats Gulliver.

When men give up the use of the divine gift of reason in writing on any subject, be it religious or anything else, there are no bounds to their extravagance, no limit to their absurdities.

The three volumes which this Bishop has written on what he calls the prophecies, contain above 1,290 pages, and he says in vol. 3, page 117, "*I have studied brevity.*" This is as marvellous as the Bishop's great gun.

concludes his book with something that beats all fable; for he says at the last verse, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they could be written every one, *I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*"

This is what in vulgar life is called a *thumper;* that is, not only a lie, but a lie upon the line of possibility; besides which it is an absurdity, for if they should be written in the world, the world would contain them.—Here ends the examination of the passages called prophecies.

I HAVE now, reader, gone through and examined all the passages which the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, quote from the Old Testament and call them prophecies of Jesus Christ. When I first sat down to this examination, I expected to find cause for some censure, but little did I expect to find them so utterly destitute of truth, and of all pretensions to it, as I have shown them to be.

The practice which the writers of those books employ is not more false than it is absurd. They state some trifling case of the person they call Jesus Christ, and then cut out a sentence from some passage of the Old Testament and call it a prophecy of that case. But when the words thus cut out are restored to the place they are taken from, and read with the words before and after them, they give the lie to the New Testament. A short instance or two of this will suffice for the whole.

They make Joseph to dream of an angel, who informs him that Herod is dead, and tells him to come with the child out of Egypt. They then cut out a sentence from the book of Hosea, "*Out of Egypt have I called my Son,*" and apply it as a prophecy in that case.

The words "*And called my Son out of Egypt,*" are in the Bible;—but what of that? They are only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and stand immediately connected with other words, which show they refer to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards.

Again, they tell us that when the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified persons, they found Jesus was already dead, and, therefore, did not break his They then, with some alteration of the original, cut out a sentence from Exodus, "*a*

bone of him shall not be broken," and apply it as a prophecy of that case.

The words "*Neither shall ye break a bone thereof,*" (for they have altered the text,) are in the Bible—but what of that? They are, as in the former case, only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and when read with the words they are immediately joined to, show it is the bones of a he-lamb or a he-goat of which the passage speaks.

These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well-founded suspicion, that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ are *made cases*, on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases; and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man—that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, as Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man.

Did we find in any other book pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities, which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly show their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition. But since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every inquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it.

When a book, as is the case with the Old and New Testament, is ushered into the world under the title of being the WORD OF GOD, it ought to be examined with the utmost strictness, in order to know if it has a well-founded claim to that title or not, and whether we are or are not imposed upon: for as no poison is so dangerous as that which poisons the physic, so no falsehood is so fatal as that which is made an article of faith.

This examination becomes more necessary, because when the New Testament was written, I might say invented, the art of printing was not known, and there were no other copies of the Old Testament than written copies. A written copy of that book would cost about as much as six hundred common printed

bibles now cost; consequently was in the hands of very few persons, and these chiefly of the church. This gave an opportunity to the writers of the New Testament to make quotations from the Old Testament as they pleased, and call them prophecies, with very little danger of being detected. Besides which, the terrors and inquisitorial fury of the church, like what they tell us of the flaming sword that turned every way, stood sentry over the New Testament; and time, which brings everything else to light, has served to thicken the darkness that guards it from detection.

Were the New Testament now to appear for the first time, every priest of the present day would examine it line by line, and compare the detached sentences it calls prophecies with the whole passages in the Old Testament from whence they are taken. Why then do they not make the same examination at this time, as they would make had the New Testament never appeared before? If it be proper and right to make it in one case, it is equally proper and right to do it in the other case. Length of time can make no difference in the right to do it at any time. But, instead of doing this, they go on as their predecessors went on before them, to tell the people there are prophecies of Jesus Christ, when the truth is there are none.

They tell us that Jesus rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. It is very easy to say so; a great lie is as easily told as a little one. But if he had done so, those would have been the only circumstances respecting him that would have differed from the common lot of man; and, consequently, the only case that would apply exclusively to him, as prophecy, would be some passage in the Old Testament that foretold such things of him. But there is not a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person, who, after being crucified, dead, and buried, should rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven. Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence the Old Testament guards upon such things, by telling us of passages they call prophecies, and that falsely so, about Joseph's dream, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff.

In writing upon this, as upon every other subject, I speak a language full and intelligible. I deal not in hints and intimations. I have several reasons for this: First, that I may be clearly understood. Secondly, that it may be seen I am in earnest. And thirdly, because it is an affront to truth to treat falsehood with complaisance.

I will close this treatise with a subject I have already touched upon in the First Part of the "Age of Reason."

The world has been amused with the term *revealed religion*, and the generality of priests apply this term to the books called the Old and New Testament. The Mahometans apply the same term to the Koran. There is no man that believes in revealed religion stronger than I do; but it is not the reveries of the Old and New Testament, nor of the Koran, that I dignify with that sacred title. That which is revelation to me, exists in something which no human mind can invent, no human hand can counterfeit or alter.

The *Word of God* is the *Creation* we behold; and this word of God revealeth to man all that is necessary for man to know of his Creator.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of his creation.

Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed.

Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth.

Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance, even from the unthankful.

Do we want to contemplate his will, so far as it respects man? The goodness he shows to all, is a lesson for our conduct to each other.

In fine—Do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, or any impostor invent; but the scripture called the Creation.

When, in the first part of the "Age of Reason," I called the Creation the true revelation of God to man, I did not know that any other person had expressed the same idea. But I lately met with the writings of Doctor Conyers Middleton, published the beginning of last century, in which he expresses himself in the same manner with respect to the Creation as I have done in the "Age of Reason."

He was principal librarian of the University of Cambridge, in England, which furnished him with extensive opportunities of reading, and necessarily required he should be well acquainted with the dead as well as the living languages. He was a man of a strong original mind; had the courage to think for himself, and the honesty to speak his thoughts.

He made a journey to Rome, from whence he wrote letters to show that the forms and ceremonies of the Romish Christian Church were taken from the degenerate state of the heathen mythology, as it stood in the latter times of the Greeks and Romans. He attacked without ceremony the miracles which the Church pretend to perform: and in one of his treatises, he calls the creation a *revelation.* The priests of England of that day, in order to defend their citadel by first defending its outworks, attacked him for attacking the Roman ceremonies; and one of them censures him for calling the *creation* a *revelation*—he thus replies to him:

"One of them," says he, "appears to be scandalized by the title of *revelation* which I have given to that discovery which God made of himself in the visible works of his creation. Yet it is no other than what the wise in all ages have given to it, who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation which God has ever given of himself, from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this by which the first notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth, and by which alone it has been kept up ever since among the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of consequences, to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God or to his fellow-creatures. This constitution of things was ordained by God, as an universal law, or rule of conduct to man—the source of all his knowledge—the test of all truth, by which all subsequent revelations which are supposed to have been given by God in any other manner, must be tried, and cannot be received as divine any further than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

"It was this divine law which I referred to in the passage above recited (meaning the passage on which they had attacked him), being desirous to excite the reader's attention to it, as it would enable him to judge more freely of the argument I was handling. For, by contemplating this law, he would discover the genuine way which God himself has marked out to us for the acquisition of true knowledge; not from the authority or reports of our fellow-creatures, but from the information of the facts and material objects which in his providential distribution of wordly things, he hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these that his existence and

nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered to man, so that grand discovery furnished new light towards tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge more easy discoverable to us by the same method.

"I had another view likewise in the same passage, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe that they are all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of his nature, carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and showing themselves to be the production of an all-wise and Almighty being; and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine whether those miraculous interpositions so confidently affirmed to us by the primitive fathers, can reasonably be thought to make part in the grand scheme of the divine administration, or whether it be agreeable that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleases by the same will, should, for the particular purposes of his government and the services of his church, *descend to the expedient of visions and revelations*, granted sometimes to boys for the instruction of the elders, and sometimes to women to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes to pastors of the Church, to enjoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a priest;—or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a martyr, yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without any sensible effect, either of preserving the life or easing the sufferings of the saint; or even of mortifying his persecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor martyr to expire in a miserable death. When these things, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuine and indisputable works of the Creator, how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they be?—and how incredible must it be thought, that for the instruction of his church, God should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate as the ecstacies of women and boys, and the visions of interested priests, which were derided at the very time by men of sense to whom they were proposed.

"That this universal law (continues Middleton, meaning the law revealed in the works of the creation) was actually revealed

to the heathen world long before the gospel was known, we learn from all the principal sages of antiquity, who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings.

"Cicero has given us a short abstract of it in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on government, which I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the passages that appear so dark and dangerous to my antagonists."

"The true law (says Cicero) is right reason conformable to the nature of things, constant, eternal, diffused through all, which calls us to duty by commanding—deters us from sin by forbidding; which never loses its influence with the good, nor never preserves it with the wicked. This law cannot be overruled by any other, nor abrogated in whole or in part; nor can we be absolved from it either by the senate or by the people; nor are we to seek any other comment or interpreter of it but himself; nor can there be one law at Rome and another at Athens—one now and another hereafter: but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations at all times, under one common master and governor of all—GOD. He is the inventor, propounder, enacter, of this law; and whoever will not obey it must first renounce himself and throw off the nature of man; by doing which he will suffer the greatest punishments, though he should escape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked." Here ends the quotation from Cicero.

"Our Doctors (continues Middleton) perhaps will look on this as RANK DEISM; but let them call it what they will I shall ever avow and defend it as the fundamental, essential, and vital part of all true religion." Here ends the quotation from Middleton."

I have here given the reader two sublime extracts from men who lived in ages of time far remote from each other, but who thought alike. Cicero lived before the time in which they tell us Christ was born. Middleton may be called a man of our own time, as he lived within the same century with ourselves.

In Cicero we see that vast superiority of mind, that sublimity of right reasoning and justness of ideas which man acquires, not by studying Bibles and Testaments and the theology of schools built thereon, but by studying the Creator in the immensity and unchangeable order of his creation and the immutability of his law. "*There cannot,*" says Cicero, "*be one law now, and*

another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all—GOD." But according to the doctrines of schools which priests have set up, we see one law called the Old Testament, given in one age of the world, and other law, called the New Testament, given in another age of the world. As all this is contradictory to the eternal immutable nature, and the unerring and unchangeable wisdom of God, we must be compelled to hold this doctrine to be false, and the old and the new law, called the Old and the New Testament, to be impositions, fables and forgeries.

In Middleton, we see the manly eloquence of an enlarged mind and the genuine sentiments of a true believer in his Creator. Instead of reposing his faith on books, by whatever name they may be called, whether Old Testament or New, he fixes the creation as the great original standard by which every other thing called the word, or work of God, is to be tried. In this we have an indisputable scale, whereby to measure every word or work imputed to him. If the thing so imputed, carries not in itself the evidence of the same Almightiness of power, of the same unerring truth and wisdom, and the same unchangeable order in all its parts, as are visibly demonstrated to our senses, and incomprehensible by our reason, in the magnificent fabric of the universe, that word or that work is not of God. Let then the two books called the Old and New Testament be tried by this rule, and the result will be, that the authors of them, whoever they were, will be convicted of forgery.

The invariable principles and unchangeable order which regulate the movements of all the parts that compose the universe, demonstrate both to our senses and our reason that its Creator is a God of unerring truth. But the Old Testament, besides the numberless, absurd, and bagatelle stories it tells of God, represents him as a God of deceit, a God not to be confided in. Ezekiel makes God to say, chap. 14, ver. 9, "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, *the Lord, hath deceived that prophet.*" And at the 20th chap., ver. 25, he makes God in speaking of the children of Israel to say, "*Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live.*"

This, so far from being the word of God, is horrid blasphemy against him. Reader, put thy confidence in thy God, and put no trust in the Bible.

The same Old Testament, after telling us that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, makes the same almighty power and eternal wisdom employ itself in giving directions how a priest's garment should be cut, and what sort of stuff they should be made of, and what their offerings should be, gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair, and ram's skins dyed red, and badger skins, &c., chap. xxv., ver. 3; and in one of the pretended prophecies I have just examined, God is made to give directions how they should kill, cook, and eat a he-lamb or a he-goat. And Ezekiel, chap. iv., to fill up the measure of abominable absurdity, makes God to order him to take *wheat and barley, and beans and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and make a loaf or a cake thereof, and bake it with human dung and eat it;* but as Ezekiel complained that this mess was too strong for his stomach, the matter was compromised from man's dung to cow's dung, Ezekiel chap. iv. Compare all this ribaldry, blasphemously called the word of God, with the Almighty power that created the universe, and whose eternal wisdom directs and governs all its mighty movements, and we shall be at a loss to find a name sufficiently contemptible for it.

In the promises which the Old Testament pretends that God made to his people, the same derogatory ideas of him prevail. It makes God to promise to Abraham that his seed should be like the stars in heaven and the sand on the sea shore for multitude, and that he would give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance for ever. But observe, reader, how the performance of this promise was to begin, and then ask thine own reason, if the wisdom of God, whose power is equal to his will, could consistently with that power, and that wisdom, make such a promise.

The performance of the promise was to begin, according to that book, by four hundred years of bondage and affliction. Genesis, chap. xv., ver. 13. "*And God said unto Abraham, know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.*" This promise, then, to Abraham and his seed for ever, to inherit the land of Canaan, had it been a fact instead of a fable, was to operate in the commencement of it, as a curse upon all the people and their children, and their children's children for four hundred years.

But the case is, the book of Genesis was written after the

bondage in Egypt had taken place ; and in order to get rid of the disgrace of the Lord's chosen people, as they called themselves, being in bondage to the Gentiles, they make God to be the author of it, and annex it as a condition to a pretended promise ; as if God, in making that promise, had exceeded his power in performing it, and consequently his wisdom in making it, and was obliged to compromise with them for one-half, and with the Egyptians, to whom they were to be in bondage, for the other half.

Without degrading my own reason by bringing those wretched and contemptible tales into a comparative view, with the Almighty power and eternal wisdom, which the Creator had demonstrated to our senses in the creation of the universe, I will confine myself to say, that if we compare them with the divine and forcible sentiments of Cicero, the result will be that the human mind has degenerated by believing them. Man in a state of grovelling superstition, from which he has not courage to rise, loses the energy of his mental powers.

I will not tire the reader with more observations on the Old Testament.

As to the New Testament, if it be brought and tried by that standard, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has revealed to our senses of his Almighty power and wisdom in the creation and government of the visible universe, it will be found equally as false, paltry, and absurd as the Old.

Without entering, in this place, into any other argument, that the story of Christ is of human invention, and not of divine origin, I will confine myself to show that it is derogatory to God, by the contrivance of it ; because the means it supposes God to use, are not adequate to the end to be obtained ; and, therefore, are derogatory to the Almightiness of his power, and the eternity of his wisdom.

The New Testament supposes that God sent his Son upon earth to make a new covenant with man ; which the church calls *the covenant of Grace*, and to instruct mankind in a new doctrine which it calls *Faith*, meaning thereby not faith in God, for Cicero and all true Deists always had and always will have this; but faith in the person called Jesus Christ, and that whoever had not this faith should, to use the words of the New Testament, be DAMNED.

Now, if this were a fact, it is consistent with that attribute of God, called his *Goodness*, that no time should be lost in

letting poor unfortunate man know it; and as that goodness was united to Almighty power, and that power to Almighty wisdom, all the means existed in the hand of the Creator to make it known immediately over the whole earth, in a manner suitable to the Almightiness of his divine nature, and with evidence that would not leave man in doubt; for it is always incumbent upon us, in all cases, to believe that the Almighty always acts, not by imperfect means as imperfect man acts, but consistently with his Almightiness. It is this only that can become the infallible criterion by which we can possibly distinguish the works of God from the works of man.

Observe, now, reader, how the comparison between this supposed mission of Christ, on the belief or disbelief of which they say man was to be saved or damned—observe, I say, how the comparison between this and the Almighty power and wisdom of God demonstrated to our senses in the visible creation, goes on.

The Old Testament tells us that God created the heavens and the earth, and everything therein in six days. The term *six days* is ridiculous enough when applied to God; but leaving out that absurdity, it contains the idea of Almighty power acting unitedly with Almighty wisdom, to produce an immense work, that of the creation of the universe and everything therein, in a short time.

Now as the eternal salvation of man is of much greater importance than his creation, and as that salvation depends, as the New Testament tells us, on man's knowledge of, and belief in the person called Jesus Christ, it necessarily follows from our belief in the goodness and justice of God, and our knowledge of his almighty power and wisdom, as demonstrated in the creation, that ALL THIS, if true, would be made known to all parts of the world, in as little time at least, as was employed in making the world. To suppose the Almighty would pay greater regard and attention to the creation and organization of inanimate matter, than he would to the salvation of innumerable millions of souls, which himself had created, "*as the image of himself*," is to offer an insult to his goodness and his justice.

Now observe, reader, how the promulgation of this pretended salvation by a knowledge of, and a belief in Jesus Christ went on, compared with the work of creation.

In the first place, it took longer time to make a child than to make the world, for nine months were passed away and totally lost in a state of pregnancy; which is more than forty times

longer time than God employed in making the world, according to the Bible account. Secondly, several years of Christ's life were lost in a state of human infancy. But the universe was in maturity the moment it existed. Thirdly, Christ, as Luke asserts, was thirty years old before he began to preach what they call his mission. Millions of souls died in the meantime without knowing it. Fourthly, it was above three hundred years from that time before the book called the New Testament was compiled into a written copy, before which time there was no such book. Fifthly, it was above a thousand years after that, before it could be circulated; because neither Jesus nor his apostles had knowledge of, or were inspired with the art of printing: and, consequently, as the means for making it universally known did not exist, the means were not equal to the end, and, therefore, it is not the work of God.

I will here subjoin the nineteenth Psalm, which is truly deistical, to show how universally and instantaneously the works of God make themselves known, compared with this pretended salvation by Jesus Christ.

Psalm 19th. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work—Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge—There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard—Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a chamber for the sun. Which is a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race—his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Now, had the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the Sun and the Moon, in characters that all nations would have understood, the whole earth had known it in twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it; whereas, though it is now almost two thousand years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth know anything of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it.

I have now, reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shown there is no such thing.

I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of his

Power and Wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which everything ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character, or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means, slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and, therefore, the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit.

The priests of the present day profess to believe it. They gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is. HE THAT BELIEVES IN THE STORY OF CHRIST IS AN INFIDEL TO GOD.

THOMAS PAINE.

EXTRACT FROM A REPLY

TO THE

BISHOP OF LLANDAFF

[This extract from Mr. Paine's reply to Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, was given by him, not long before his death, to Mrs. Palmer, widow of Elihu Palmer. He retained the work entire, and, therefore, must have transcribed this part, which was unusual for him to do. Probably he had discovered errors, which he corrected in the copy. Mrs. Palmer presented it to the editor of a periodical work, entitled "The Theophilanthropist," published in New York, in which it appeared in 1810.]

GENESIS.

The Bishop says, "the oldest book in the world is Genesis." This is mere assertion; he offers no proof of it, and I go to controvert it, and to show that the book of Job, which is not a Hebrew book, but is a book of the Gentiles, translated into Hebrew, is much older than the book of Genesis.

The book of Genesis means the book of Generations; to which are prefixed two chapters, the first and second, which contain two different cosmogonies, that is, two different accounts of the creation of the world, written by different persons, as I have shown in the preceding part of this work.*

The first cosmogony begins at the first verse of the first chapter, and ends at the end of the third verse of the second chapter; for the adverbial conjunction *thus*, with which the second chapter begins, shows those three verses to belong to the first chapter. The second cosmogony begins at the fourth verse of the second chapter, and ends with that chapter.

In the first cosmogony the name of God is used, without any epithet joined to it, and is repeated thirty-five times. In the second cosmogony it is always the Lord God, which is repeated eleven times. These two different styles of expression show these two chapters to be the work of two different persons, and

* See Letter to Erskine, page 229.

the contradictions they contain show they cannot be the work of one and the same person, as I have already shown.

The third chapter, in which the style of Lord God is continued in every instance, except in the supposed conversation between the woman and the serpent (for in every place in that chapter where the writer speaks, it is always the Lord God), shows this chapter to belong to the second cosmogony.

This chapter gives an account of what is called the fall of man, which is no other than a fable borrowed from, and constructed upon the religion of Zoroaster, or the Persians, or the annual progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. It is the *fall of the year*, the approach and *evil* of winter, announced by the ascension of the autumnal constellation of the *serpent* of the Zodiac, and not the moral *fall of man* that is the key of the allegory, and of the fable in Genesis borrowed from it.

The fall of man in Genesis, is said to have been produced by eating a certain fruit, generally taken to be an apple. The fall of the year is the season for the gathering and eating the new apples of that year. The allegory, therefore, holds with respect to the fruit, which it would not have done had it been an early summer fruit. It holds also with respect to place. The tree is said to have been placed in the *midst* of the garden. But why in the midst of the garden more than in any other place? The situation of the allegory gives the answer to this question, which is, that the fall of the year, when apples and other autumnal fruits are ripe, and when days and nights are of equal length, is the mid-season between summer and winter.

It holds also with respect to clothing and the temperature of the air. It is said in Genesis, chap. iii. ver. 24, "*Unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them.*" But why are coats of skins mentioned? This cannot be understood as referring to anything of the nature of *moral evil.* The solution of the allegory gives again the answer to this question, which is, that the *evil of winter*, which follows the *fall of the year*, fabulously called in Genesis the *fall of man*, makes warm clothing necessary.

But of these things I shall speak fully when I come in another part to treat of the ancient religion of the Persians, and compare it with the modern religion of the New Testament.* At present, I shall confine myself to the comparative

* Not published.

antiquity of the books of Genesis and Job, taking, at the same time, whatever I may find in my way with respect to the fabulousness of the book of Genesis; for if what is called the fall of man, in Genesis, be fabulous or allegorical, that which is called the redemption, in the New Testament, cannot be a fact. It is morally impossible, and impossible also in the nature of things, that *moral good* can redeem *physical evil.* I return to the bishop.

If Genesis be, as the bishop asserts, the oldest book in the world, and consequently, the oldest and first written book of the Bible, and if the extraordinary things related in it, such as the creation of the world in six days, the tree of life, and of good and evil, the story of Eve and the talking serpent, the fall of man and his being turned out of Paradise, were facts, or even believed by the Jews to be facts, they would be referred to as fundamental matters, and that very frequently, in the books of the Bible that were written by various authors afterwards; whereas, there is not a book, chapter, or verse of the Bible, from the time Moses is said to have written the book of Genesis, to the book of Malachi, the last book in the Bible, including a space of more than a thousand years, in which there is any mention made of these things, or any of them, nor are they so much as alluded to. How will the bishop solve this difficulty, which stands as a circumstantial contradiction to his assertion?

There are but two ways of solving it.

First, that the book of Genesis is not an ancient book; that it has been written by some (now) unknown person, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about a thousand years after the time that Moses is said to have lived, and put as a preface or introduction to the other books, when they were formed into a canon in the time of the second temple, and, therefore, not having existed before that time, none of these things mentioned in it could be referred to in those books.

Secondly, that admitting Genesis to have been written by Moses, the Jews did not believe the things stated in it to be true, and, therefore as they could not refer to them as facts, they would not refer to them as fables. The first of these solutions goes against the antiquity of the book, and the second against its authenticity, and the bishop may take which he pleases.

But, be the author of Genesis whoever he may, there is abundant evidence to show, as well from the early Christian writers,

as from the Jews themselves, that the things stated in that book were not believed to be facts. Why they have been believed as facts since that time, when better and fuller knowledge existed on the case, than is known now, can be accounted for only on the imposition of priestcraft.

Augustine, one of the early champions of the Christian church, acknowledges in his "City of God," that the adventure of Eve and the serpent, and the account of Paradise, were generally considered as fiction or allegory. He regards them as allegory himself, without attempting to give any explanation, but he supposes that a better explanation might be found than those that had been offered.

Origen, another early champion of the church, says, "What man of good sense can ever persuade himself that there were a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of these days had a night when there were yet neither sun, moon, nor stars. What man can be stupid enough to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, had planted a garden in the east, that the tree of life was a real tree, and that its fruit had the virtue of making those who eat of it live for ever?"

Maimonides, one of the most learned and celebrated of the Jewish Rabbins, who lived in the eleventh century (about seven or eight hundred years ago) and to whom the bishop refers in his answer to me, is very explicit, in his book entitled "More Nevochim," upon the non-reality of the things stated in the account of the Creation in the book of Genesis.

"We ought not (says he) to understand, nor take according to the letter, that which is written in the book of the Creation, nor to have the same ideas of it with common men; otherwise, our ancient sages would not have recommended, with so much care, to conceal the sense of it, and not to raise the allegorical veil which envelopes the truths it contains. The book of Genesis, taken according to the letter, gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity. Whoever shall find out the sense of it, ought to restrain himself from divulging it. It is a maxim which all our sages repeat, and above all with respect to the work of six days. It may happen that some one, with the aid he may borrow from others, may hit upon the meaning of it. In that case he ought to impose silence upon himself; or if he speak of it, he ought to speak obscurely, and in an enigmatical manner, as I do myself, leaving the rest to be found out by those who can understand."

This is, certainly, a very extraordinary declaration of Maimonides, taking all the parts of it.

First, he declares, that the account of the Creation in the book of Genesis is not a fact; that to believe it to be a fact, gives the most absurd and the most extravagant ideas of the Divinity.

Secondly, that it is an allegory.

Thirdly, that the allegory has a concealed secret.

Fourthly, that whoever can find the secret ought not to tell it.

It is this last part that is the most extraordinary. Why all this care of the Jewish Rabbins, to prevent what they call the concealed meaning, or the secret, from being known, and, if known, to prevent any of their people from telling it? It certainly must be something which the Jewish nation are afraid or ashamed the world should know. It must be something personal to them as a people, and not a secret of a divine nature, which the more it is known, the more it increases the glory of the Creator, and the gratitude and happiness of man. It is not God's secret, but their own, they are keeping. I go to unveil the secret.

The case is, the Jews have stolen their cosmogony, that is, their account of the Creation, from the cosmogony of the Persians, contained in the book of Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, and brought it with them when they returned from captivity by the benevolence of Cyrus, King of Persia; for it is evident, from the silence of all the books of the Bible upon tho subject of the Creation, that the Jews had no cosmogony before that time. If they had a cosmogony from the time of Moses, some of their judges who governed during more than four hundred years, or of their kings, the Davids and Solomons of their day, who governed nearly five hundred years, or of their prophets and psalmists, who lived in the meantime, would have mentioned it. It would, either as fact or fable, have been the grandest of all subjects for a psalm. It would have suited to a tittle the ranting, poetical genius of Isaiah, or served as a cordial to the gloomy Jeremiah. But not one word nor even a whisper, does any of the Bible authors give upon the subject.

To conceal the theft, the Rabbins of the second temple have published Genesis as a book of Moses, and have enjoined secrecy to all their people, who, by travelling, or otherwise, might happen to discover from whence the cosmogony was borrowed, not to tell it. The evidence of circumstances is often unanswer-

able, and there is no other than this which I have given, that goes to the whole of the case, and this does.

Diogenes Laertius, an ancient and respectable author whom the bishop, in his answer to me, quotes on another occasion, has a passage that corresponds with the solution here given. In speaking of the religion of the Persians, as promulgated by their priests or magi, he says, the Jewish Rabbins were the successors of their doctrine. Having thus spoken on the plagiarism, and on the non-reality of the book of Genesis, I will give some additional evidence that Moses is not the author of that book. Eben-Ezra, a celebrated Jewish author, who lived about seven hundred years ago, and whom the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, has made a great many observations, too numerous to be repeated here, to show that Moses was not, and could not be, the author of the book of Genesis, nor any of the five books that bear his name.

Spinosa, another learned Jew, who lived about a hundred and thirty years ago, recites, in his "Treatise on the Ceremonies of the Jews, Ancient and Modern," the observations of Eben-Ezra, to which he adds many others, to show that Moses is not the author of these books. He also says, and shows his reasons for saying it, that the Bible did not exist as a book, till the time of the Maccabees, which was more than a hundred years after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

In the second part of the "Age of Reason," I have, among other things, referred to nine verses in the 36th chapter of Genesis, beginning at the 31st verse, "These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," which is impossible could have been written by Moses, or in the time of Moses, and could not have been written until after the Jew kings began to reign in Israel, which was not till several hundred years after the time of Moses.

The bishop allows this, and says "I think you say true." But he then quibbles, and says, that a small addition to a book does not destroy either the genuineness or authenticity of the whole book. This is priestcraft. These verses do not stand in the book as an addition to it, but as making a part of the whole book, and which it is impossible that Moses could write. The bishop would reject the antiquity of any other book if it could be proved from the words of the book itself that a part of it could not have been written till several hundred years after the reputed author of it was dead. He would call such a book a

forgery. I am authorised, therefore, to call the book of Genesis a forgery.

Combining, then, all the foregoing circumstances together respecting the antiquity and authenticity of the book of Genesis, a conclusion will naturally follow therefrom; those circumstances are,

First, that certain parts of the book cannot possibly have been written by Moses, and that the other parts carry no evidence of having been written by him.

Secondly, the universal silence of all the following books of the Bible, for about a thousand years, upon the extraordinary things spoken of in Genesis, such as the creation of the world in six days—the garden of Eden—the tree of knowledge—the tree of life—the story of Eve and the serpent—the fall of man, and his being turned out of this fine garden, together with Noah's flood, and the tower of Babel.

Thirdly, the silence of all the books of the Bible upon even the name of Moses, from the book of Joshua until the second book of Kings, which was not written till after the captivity, for it gives an account of the captivity, a period of about a thousand years. Strange that a man who is proclaimed as the historian of the Creation, the privy-counsellor and confidant of the Almighty—the legislator of the Jewish nation, and the founder of its religion; strange, I say, that even the name of such a man should not find a place in their books for a thousand years, if they knew or believed anything about him, or the books he is said to have written.

Fourthly, the opinion of some of the most celebrated of the Jewish commentators, that Moses is not the author of the book of Genesis, founded on the reasons given for that opinion.

Fifthly, the opinion of the early Christian writers, and of the great champion of Jewish literature, Maimonides, that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts.

Sixthly, the silence imposed by all the Jewish Rabbins, and by Maimonides himself, upon the Jewish nation, not to speak of anything they may happen to know, or discover, respecting the cosmogony (or creation of the world) in the book of Genesis.

From these circumstances the following conclusions offer—

First, that the book of Genesis is not a book of facts.

Secondly, that as no mention is made throughout the Bible of any of the extraordinary things related in Genesis, that it has not been written till after the other books were written, and put

as a preface to the Bible. Every one knows that a preface to a book, though it stands first, is the last written.

Thirdly, that the silence imposed by all the Jewish Rabbins, and by Maimonides upon the Jewish nation, to keep silence upon every thing related in their cosmogony, evinces a secret they are not willing should be known. The secret, therefore, explains itself to be, that when the Jews were in captivity in Babylon and Persia, they became acquainted with the cosmogony of the Persians, as registered in the Zend-Avesta, of Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, which, after their return from captivity, they manufactured and modelled as their own, and ante-dated it by giving to it the name of Moses. The case admits of no other explanation. From all which it appears that the book of Genesis, instead of being the *oldest book in the world*, as the bishop calls it, has been the last written book of the Bible, and that the cosmogony it contains has been manufactured.

ON THE NAMES IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

Everything in Genesis serves as evidence, or symptom, that the book has been composed in some late period of the Jewish nation. Even the names mentioned in it serve to this purpose.

Nothing is more common or more natural, than to name the children of succeeding generations after the names of those who had been celebrated in some former generation. This holds good with respect to all the people and all the histories we know of, and it does not hold good with the Bible. There must be some cause for this.

This book of Genesis tells us of a man whom it calls Adam and of his sons Abel and Seth; of Enoch who lived 365 years (it is exactly the number of days in a year), and that then God, took him up. It has the appearance of being taken from some allegory of the Gentiles on the commencement and termination of the year by the progress of the sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, on which the allegorical religion of the Gentiles was founded.

It tells us of Methuselah who lived 969 years, and of a long train of other names in the fifth chapter. It then passes on to a man whom it calls Noah, and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet: then to Lot, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and his sons. with which the book of Genesis finishes.

All these, according to the account given in that book, were the most extraordinary and celebrated of men. They were,

moreover, heads of families. Adam was the father of the world. Enoch, for his righteousness, was taken up to heaven. Methuselah lived to almost a thousand years. He was the son of Enoch, the man of 365, the number of days in a year. It has the appearance of being the continuation of an Allegory on the 365 days of a year, and its abundant productions. Noah was selected from all the world to be preserved when it was drowned, and became the second father of the world. Abraham was the father of the faithful multitude. Isaac and Jacob were the inheritors of his fame, and the last was the father of the twelve tribes.

Now, if these very wonderful men and their names, and the book that records them, had been known by the Jews, before the Babylonian captivity, those names would have been as common among the Jews before that period as they have been since. We now hear of thousands of Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs among the Jews, but there were none of that name before the Babylonian captivity. The Bible does not mention one, though from the time that Abraham is said to have lived, to the time of the Babylonian captivity, is about 1400 years.

How is it to be accounted for, that there have been so many thousands, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Jews of the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob since that period, and not one before? It can be accounted for but one way, which is that before the Babylonian captivity, the Jews had no such book as Genesis, nor knew anything of the names and persons it mentions, nor of the things it relates, and that the stories in it have been manufactured since that time. From the Arabic name *Ibrahim* (which is the manner the Turks write that name to this day) the Jews have most probably manufactured their Abraham.

I will advance my observations a point further, and speak of the names of *Moses* and *Aaron*, mentioned for the first time in the book of Exodus. There are now, and have continued to be from the time of the Babylonian captivity, or soon after it, thousands of Jews of the names of *Moses* and *Aaron*, and we read not of any of that name before that time. The Bible does not mention one. The direct inference from this is, that the Jews knew of no such book as Exodus, before the Babylonian captivity. In fact, that it did not exist before that time, and that it is only since the book has been invented, that the names of *Moses* and *Aaron* have been common among the Jews.

It is applicable to the purpose, to observe, that the picturesque work, called *Mosaic-work*, spelled the same as you would say the *Mosaic* account of the creation, is not derived from the word *Moses* but from *Muses* (the *Muses*, because of the variegated and picturesque pavement in the temples dedicated to the *Muses*). This carries a strong implication that the name *Moses* is drawn from the same source, and that he is not a real but an allegorical person, as Maimonides describes what is called the *Mosaic* account of the creation to be.

I will go a point still further. The Jews now know the book of Genesis, and the names of all the persons mentioned in the first *ten chapters* of that book, from Adam to Noah: yet we do not hear (I speak for myself) of any Jew of the present day, of the name of Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Noah,* Shem, Ham, or Japhet (names mentioned in the first ten chapters), though these were, according to the account in that book, the most extraordinary of all the names that make up the catalogue of the Jewish chronology.

The names the Jews now adopt are those that are mentioned in Genesis after the tenth chapter, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. How then does it happen, that they do not adopt the names found in the first ten chapters? Here is evidently a line of division drawn between the first ten chapters of Genesis, and the remaining chapters, with respect to the adoption of names. There must be some cause for this, and I go to offer a solution of the problem.

The reader will recollect the quotation I have already made from the Jewish Rabbin, Maimonides, wherein he says, "We ought not to understand nor to take according to the letter that which is written in the book of the creation. It is a maxim (says he) which all our sages repeat *above all*, with respect to the work of six days."

The qualifying expression *above all*, implies there are other parts of the book, though not so important, that ought not to be understood or taken according to the letter, and as the Jews do not adopt the names mentioned in the first ten chapters, it appears evident those chapters are included in the injunction not to take them in a literal sense, or according to the letter; from which it follows, that the persons or characters mentioned in the first ten chapters, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Methu-

* Noah is an exception; there are many of that name among the Jews.—EDITOR.

selah, and so on to Noah, are not real but fictitious or allegorical persons, and, therefore, the Jews do not adopt their names into their families. If they affixed the same idea of reality to them as they do to those that follow after the tenth chapter, the names of Adam, Abel, Seth, &c., would be as common among the Jews of the present day, as are those of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron.

In the superstition they have been in, scarcely a Jew family would have been without an *Enoch*, as a presage of his going to heaven as ambassador for the whole family. Every mother who wished that the *days* of her son *might be long in the land* would call him *Methuselah;* and all the Jews that might have to traverse the ocean would be named Noah, as a charm against shipwreck and drowning.

This is domestic evidence against the book of Genesis, which joined to the several kinds of evidence before recited, shows the book of Genesis not to be older than the Babylonian captivity, and to be fictitious. I proceed to fix the character and antiquity of the book of

JOB.

The book of Job has not the least appearance of being a book of the Jews, and though printed among the books of the Bible, does not belong to it. There is no reference in it to any Jewish law or ceremony. On the contrary, all the internal evidence it contains shows it to be a book of the Gentiles, either of Persia or Chaldea.

The name of Job does not appear to be a Jewish name. There is no Jew of that name in any of the books of the Bible, neither is there now that I ever heard of. The country where Job is said or supposed to have lived, or rather where the scene of the drama is laid, is called Uz, and there was no place of that name ever belonging to the Jews. If Uz is the same as Ur, it was in Chaldea, or the country of the Gentiles.

The Jews can give no account how they came by this book, nor who was the author, nor the time when it was written. Origen, in his work against Celsus (in the first ages of the Christian church), says, *that the book of Job is older than Moses.* Eben-Ezra, the Jewish commentator, whom (as I have before said) the bishop allows to have been a man of great erudition, and who certainly understood his own language, says, that the book of Job has been translated from another language into

Hebrew. Spinosa, another Jewish commentator of great learning, confirms the opinion of Eben-Ezra, and says moreover, "*Je crois que Job était Gentile;*" * I believe that Job was a Gentile.

The bishop (in his answer to me) says, "that the structure of the whole book of Job, in whatever light of history or drama it be considered, is founded on the belief that prevailed with the Persians and Chaldeans, and other Gentile nations, of a good and an evil spirit.

In speaking of the good and evil spirit of the Persians, the bishop writes them *Arimanius* and *Oromasdes.* I will not dispute about the orthography, because I know that translated names are differently spelled in different languages. But he has nevertheless made a capital error. He has put the devil first; for Arimanius, or, as it is more generally written, *Ahriman*, is the *evil spirit*, and *Oromasdes* or *Ormusd* the good spirit. He has made the same mistake in the same paragraph, in speaking of the good and evil spirit of the ancient Egyptians, *Osiris* and *Typho*, he puts Typho before Osiris. The error is just the same as if the bishop in writing about the Christian religion, or in preaching a sermon, were to say the *Devil* and *God.* A priest ought to know his own trade better. We agree, however, about the structure of the book of Job, that it is Gentile. I have said in the second part of the "Age of Reason," and given my reasons for it, that *the drama of it is not Hebrew.*

From the testimonies I have cited, that of Origen, who, about fourteen hundred years ago, said that the book of Job was more ancient than Moses; that of Eben-Ezra, who, in his "Commentary on Job," says, it has been translated from another language (and consequently from a Gentile language) into Hebrew; that of Spinosa, who not only says the same thing, but that the author of it was a Gentile; and that of the bishop, who says that the structure of the whole book is Gentile. It follows then, in the first place, that the book of Job is not a book of the Jews originally.

Then, in order to determine to what people or nation any book of religion belongs, we must compare it with the leading dogmas or precepts of that people or nation; and, therefore, upon the bishop's own construction, the book of Job belongs either to the ancient Persians, the Chaldeans, or the Egyptians; because

* Spinosa on the ceremonies of the Jews, page 296, published in French at Amsterdam, 1678.

the structure of it is consistent with the dogma they held, that of a good and evil spirit, called in Job, *God* and *Satan*, existing as distinct and separate beings, and it is not consistent with any dogma of the Jews.

The belief of a good and an evil spirit, existing as distinct and separate beings, is not a dogma to be found in any of the books of the Bible. It is not till we come to the New Testament that we he hear of any such dogma. There the person called the Son of God, holds conversation with Satan on a mountain, as familiarly as is represented in the drama of Job. Consequently the bishop cannot say, in this respect, that the New Testament is founded upon the Old. According to the Old, the God of the Jews was the God of everything. All good and evil came from him. According to Exodus, it was God, and not the Devil, that hardened Pharaoh's heart. According to the book of Samuel, it was an evil spirit from God that troubled Saul. And Ezekiel makes God to say, in speaking of the Jews, "*I gave them the statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they should not live.*" The bible describes the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in such a contradictory manner, and under such a two-fold character, there would be no knowing when he was in earnest and when in irony; when to believe and when not. As to the precepts, principles, and maxims, in the book of Job, they show that the people, abusively called the heathen in the books of the Jews, had the most sublime ideas of the Creator, and the most exalted devotional morality. It was the Jews who dishonored God. It was the Gentiles who glorified him. As to the fabulous personifications introduced by the Greeks and Latin poets, it was a corruption of the ancient religion of the Gentiles, which consisted in the adoration of a first cause of the works of the creation, in which the sun was the great visible agent.

It appears to have been a religion of gratitude and adoration, and not of prayer and discontented solicitation. In Job we find adoration and submission, but not prayer. Even the ten commandments enjoin not prayer. Prayer has been added to devotion by the church of Rome, as the instrument of fees and perquisites. All prayers by the priests of the Christian church, whether public or private, must be paid for. It may be right, individually, to pray for virtues, or mental instruction, but not for things. It is an attempt to dictate to the Almighty in the government of the world. But to return to the book of Job.

As the book of Job decides itself to be a book of the Gentiles, the next thing is to find out to what particular nation it belongs, and lastly, what is its antiquity.

As a composition it is sublime, beautiful and scientific: full of sentiment, and abounding in grand metaphorical description. As a drama, it is regular. The *dramatis personæ*, the persons performing the several parts, are regularly introduced and speak without interruption or confusion. The scene, as I have before said, is laid in the country of the Gentiles, and the unities, though not always necessary in a drama, are observed here as strictly as the subject would admit.

In the last act, where the Almighty is introduced as speaking from the whirlwind, to decide the controversy between Job and his friends, it is an idea as grand as poetical imagination can conceive. What follows of Job's future prosperity does not belong to it as a drama. It is an epilogue of the writer, as the first verses of the first chapter, which gave an account of Job, his country and his riches, are the prologue.

The book carries the appearance of being the work of some of the Persian Magi, not only because the structure of it corresponds to the dogmas of the religion of those people, as founded by Zoroaster, but from the astronomical references in it to the constellations of the zodiac and other objects in the heavens, of which the sun, in their religion called Mithra, was the chief. Job, in describing the power of God (Job ix. ver. 27), says, "Who commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars—who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea—who maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." All this astronomical allusion is consistent with the religion of the Persians.

Establishing then the book of Job, as the work of some of the Persian, or Eastern Magi, the case naturally follows, that when the Jews returned from captivity, by the permission of Cyrus, king of Persia, they brought this book with them: had it translated into Hebrew, and put into their scriptural canons, which were not formed till after their return. This will account for the name of Job being mentioned in Ezekiel) *Ezekiel, chap.* xiv., *v. 14*), who was one of the captives, and also for its not being mentioned in any book said or supposed to have been written before the captivity.

Among the astronomical allusions in the book, there is one which serves to fix its antiquity. It is that where God is made

to say to Job, in the style of reprimand, "*Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades.*" (Chap. xxxviii., ver. 31) As the explanation of this depends upon astronomical calculation, I will, for the sake of those who would not otherwise understand it, endeavor to explain it as clearly as the subject will admit.

The Pleiades are a cluster of pale, milky stars, about the size of a man's hand, in the constellation Taurus, or in English, the Bull. It is one of the constellations of the zodiac, of which there are twelve, answering to the twelve months of the year The Pleiades are visible in the winter nights, but not in the summer nights, being then below the horizon

The zodiac is an imaginary belt or circle in the heavens, eighteen degrees broad, in which the sun apparently makes his annual course, and in which all the planets move. When the sun appears to our view to be between us and the group of stars forming such or such a constellation, he is said to be in that constellation. Consequently the constellations he appears to be in, in the summer, are directly opposite to those he appeared in in the winter, and the same in respect to spring and autumn

The zodiac, besides being divided into twelve constellations, is also, like every other circle, great or small, divided into 360 equal parts, called degrees; consequently each constellation contains 30 degrees. The constellations of the zodiac are generally called signs, to distinguish them from the constellations that are placed out of the zodiac, and this is the name I shall now use.

The precession of the equinoxes is the part most difficult to explain, and it is on this that the explanation chiefly depends

The equinoxes correspond to the two seasons of the year when the sun makes equal day and night.

The following is a disconnected part of the same work, and is now (1824) first published.

SABBATH, OR SUNDAY.

The seventh day, or more properly speaking the period of seven days, was originally a numerical division of time and nothing more; and had the bishop been acquainted with the history of astronomy, he would have known this. The annual revolution of the earth makes what we call a year.

The year is artificially divided into months, the months into weeks of seven days, the days into hours, &c. The period of seven days, like any other of the artificial divisions of the year, is only a fractional part thereof, contrived for the convenience of countries.

It is ignorance, imposition, and priest-craft, that have called it otherwise. They might as well talk of the Lord's month, of the Lord's week, of the Lord's hour, as of the Lord's day. All time is his, and no part of it is more holy or more sacred than another. It is, however, necessary to the trade of a priest, that he should preach up a distinction of days.

Before the science of astronomy was studied and carried to the degree of eminence to which it was by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, the people of those times had no other helps, than what common observation of the very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded, to enable them to keep an account of the progress of time. As far as history establishes the point, the Egyptians were the first people who divided the year into twelve months. Herodotus, who lived above two thousand two hundred years ago, and is the most ancient historian whose works have reached our time, says, *they did this by the knowledge they had of the stars.* As to the Jews, there is not one single improvement in any science or in any scientific art, that they ever produced. They were the most ignorant of all the illiterate world. If the word of the Lord had come to them, as they pretend, and as the bishop professes to believe, and that they were to be the harbingers of it to the rest of the world; the Lord would have taught them the use of letters, and the art of printing; for without the means of communicating the word, it could not be communicated; whereas letters were the invention of the Gentile world; and printing the modern world. But to return to my subject—

Before the helps which the science of astronomy afforded, the people as before said, had no other, whereby to keep an account of the progress of time, than what the common and very visible changes of the sun and moon afforded. They saw that a great number of days made a year, but the account of them was too tedious, and too difficult to be kept numerically, from one to three hundred and sixty-five; neither did they know the true time of a solar year. It, therefore, became necessary, for the purpose of marking the progress of days, to put them into small parcels, such as are now called weeks; and which consisted as

they now do of seven days. By this means the memory was assisted as it is with us at this day; for we do not say of any thing that is past, that it was fifty, sixty, or seventy days ago, but that it was so many weeks, or, if longer time, so many months. It is impossible to keep an account of time without helps of this kind.

Julian Scaliger, the inventor of the Julian period of 7,980 years, produced by multiplying the cycle of the moon, the cycle of the sun, and the years of an indiction, 19, 28, 15, into each other; says, that the custom of reckoning by periods of seven days was used by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the people of India, the Arabs, and by all the nations of the east.

In addition to what Scaliger says, it is evident that in Britain, in Germany, and the north of Europe, they reckoned by periods of seven days, long before the book called the bible, was known in those parts; and, consequently, that they did not take that mode of reckoning from anything written in that book.

That they reckoned by periods of seven days is evident from their having seven names and no more for the several days; and which have not the most distant relation to anything in the book of Genesis, or to that which is called the fourth commandment.

Those names are still retained in England, with no other alteration than what has been produced by moulding the Saxon and Danish languages into modern English.

1. Sun-day, *Sunne* the sun, and *dag*, day, Saxon. *Sundag*, Danish. The day dedicated to the sun.

2. Monday, that is, moonday, from *Mona*, the moon, Saxon. *Moano*, Danish. Day dedicated to the moon.

3. Tuesday, that is, *Tuis-co's-day*. The day dedicated to the Idol *Tuisco*.

4. Wednes-day, that is Woden's-day. The day dedicated to *Woden*, the Mars of the Germans.

5. Thurs-day, that is Thor's-day, dedicated to the Idol *Thor*.

6. Friday, that is *Friga's-day*. The day dedicated to *Friga*, the Venus of the Saxons.

Saturday from *Seaten (Saturn)*, an Idol of the Saxons; one of the emblems representing time, which continually terminates and renews itself: the last day of the period of seven days. When we see a certain mode of reckoning general among

nations totally unconnected, differing from each other in religion and in government, and some of them unknown to each other, we may be certain that it arises from some natural and common cause, prevailing alike over all, and which strikes every one in the same manner. Thus all nations have reckoned arithmetically by tens, because the people of all nations have ten fingers. If they had more or less than ten, the mode of arithmetical reckoning would have followed that number, for the fingers are a natural numeration table to all the world. I now come to show why the period of seven days is so generally adopted.

Though the sun is the great luminary of the world, and the animating cause of all the fruits of the earth, the moon by renewing herself more than twelve times oftener than the sun, which does it but once a year, served the rustic world as a natural almanac, as the fingers served it for a numeration table. All the world could see the moon, her changes, and her monthly revolutions; and their mode of reckoning time was accommodated, as nearly as could possibly be done in round numbers, to agree with the changes of that planet, their natural almanac.

The moon performs her natural revolution round the earth in twenty-nine days and a half. She goes from a new moon to a half moon, to a full moon, to a half moon gibbous or convex, and then to a new moon again. Each of these changes is performed in seven days and nine hours; but seven days is the nearest division in round numbers that could be taken; and this was sufficient to suggest the universal custom of reckoning by periods of seven days, since it is impossible to reckon time without some stated period.

How the odd hours could be disposed of without interfering with the regular periods of seven days, in case the ancients recommenced a new Septenary period with every new moon, required no more difficulty than it did to regulate the Egyptian Calendar afterwards of twelve months of thirty days each, or the odd hour in the Julian Calendar, or the odd days and hours in the French Calendar. In all cases it is done by the addition of complimentary days; and it can be done in no otherwise.

The bishop knows that as the solar year does not end at the termination of what we call a day, but runs some hours into the next day, as the quarters of the Moon runs some hours beyond seven days; that it is impossible to give the year any fixed number of days, that will not in course of years become

wrong and make a complementary time necessary to keep the nominal year parallel with the solar year. The same must have been the case with those who regulated time formerly by lunar revolutions. They would have to add three days to every second moon, or in that proportion, in order to make the new moon and the new week commence together like the nominal year and the solar year.

Diodorus of Sicily, who, as before said, lived before Christ was born, in giving an account of times much anterior to his own, speaks of years of three months, of four months, and of six months. These could be of no other than years composed of lunar revolutions, and, therefore, to bring the several periods of seven days, to agree with such years there must have been complementary days.

The moon was the first almanac the world knew; and the only one which the face of the heavens afforded to common spectators. Her changes and her revolutions have entered into all the Calendars that have been known in the known world.

The division of the year into twelve months, which, as before shown, was first done by the Egyptians, though arranged with astronomical knowledge, had reference to the twelve moons, or more properly speaking, to the twelve lunar revolutions that appear in the space of a solar year; as the period of seven days had reference to one revolution of the moon. The feasts of the Jews were, and those of the Christian church still are, regulated by the moon. The Jews observed the feasts of the new moon and full moon, and, therefore, the period of seven days was necessary to them.

All the feasts of the Christian church are regulated by the moon. That called Easter governs all the rest, and the moon governs Easter. It is always the first Sunday after the first full moon that happens after the vernal Equinox, or 21st of March.

In proportion as the science of astronomy was studied and improved by the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and the solar year regulated by astronomical observations, the custom of reckoning by lunar revolutions became of less use, and in time discontinued. But such is the harmony of all parts of the machinery of the universe, that a calculation made from the motion of one part will correspond with the motion of some other.

The period of seven days deduced from the revolution of the moon round the earth, correspond nearer than any other period of days would do to the revolution of the earth round the sun. Fifty-two periods of seven days make 364, which is within one day and some odd hours of a solar year; and there is no other periodical number that will do the same, till we come to the number thirteen, which is too great for common use, and the numbers before seven are too small. The custom, therefore, of reckoning by periods of seven days, as best suited to the revolution of the moon, applied with equal convenience to the solar year, and became united with it. But the decimal division of time, as regulated by the French Calendar, is superior to every other method.

There is no part of the Bible that is supposed to have been written by persons who lived before the time of Josiah, (which was a thousand years after the time of Moses,) that mentions anything about the sabbath as a day consecrated to that which is called the fourth commandment, or that the Jews kept any such day. Had any such day been kept, during the thousand years of which I am speaking, it certainly would have been mentioned frequently; and that it should never be mentioned, is strong presumptive and circumstantial evidence that no such day was kept. But mention is often made of the feasts of the new moon, and of the full moon; for the Jews, as before shown, worshipped the moon; and the word *sabbath* was applied by the Jews to the feasts of that planet, and to those of their other deities. It is said in Hosea, chap. ii. verse 11, in speaking of the Jewish nation, "And I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast-days, her *new-moons*, and her *sabbaths*, and all her solemn feasts." Nobody will be so foolish as to contend that the *sabbaths* here spoken of are Mosaic sabbaths. The construction of the verse implies they are lunar sabbaths, or sabbaths of the moon. It ought also to be observed that Hosea lived in the time of Ahaz and Hezekiah, about seventy years before the time of Josiah, when the law called the law of Moses is said to have been found; and, consequently, the sabbaths that Hosea speaks of are sabbaths of the idolatry.

When those priestly reformers (impostors I should call them), Hilkiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah, began to produce books under the name of the books of Moses, they found the word *sabbath* in use: and as to the period of seven days, it is, like numbering arithmetically by tens, from time immemorial. But

having found them in use, they continued to make them serve to the support of their new imposition. They trumped up a story of the creation being made in six days, and of the Creator resting on the seventh, to suit with the lunar and chronological period of seven days; and they manufactured a commandment to agree with both. Impostors always work in this manner. They put fables for originals, and causes for effects.

There is scarcely any part of science, or anything in nature, which those impostors and blasphemers of science, called priests, as well Christians as Jews, have not, at some time or other, perverted, or sought to pervert to the purpose of superstition and falsehood. Everything wonderful in appearance has been ascribed to angels, to devils, or to saints. Everything ancient has some legendary tale annexed to it. The common operations of nature have not escaped their practice of corrupting everything.

FUTURE STATE.

The idea of a future state was an universal idea to all nations except the Jews. At the time and long before Jesus Christ and the men called his disciples were born, it had been sublimely treated of by Cicero in his book on old age, by Plato, Socrates, Xenophon, and other of the ancient theologists, whom the abusive Christian church calls heathen. Xenophon represents the elder Cyrus speaking after this manner:—

"Think not, my dearest children, that when I depart from you, I shall be no more; but remember that my soul, even while I lived among you, was invisible to you; yet by my actions you were sensible it existed in this body. Believe it therefore existing still, though it be still unseen. How quickly would the honors of illustrious men perish after death, if their souls performed nothing to preserve their fame? For my own part, I could never think that the soul, while in a mortal body, lives, but when departed from it dies; or that its consciousness is lost, when it is discharged out of an unconscious habitation. But when it is freed from all corporeal alliance, it is then that it truly exists."

Since, then, the idea of a future existence was universal, it may be asked, what new doctrine does the New Testament contain? I answer, that of corrupting the theory of the ancient

theologists, by annexing to it the heavy and gloomy doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

As to the resurrection of the body, whether the same body or another, it is a miserable conceit, fit only to be preached to man as an animal. It is not worthy to be called doctrine. Such an idea never entered the brain of any visionary but those of the Christian church;—yet it is in this that the novelty of the New Testament consists. All the other matters serve but as props to this, and those props are most wretchedly put together.

MIRACLES.

The Christian church is full of miracles. In one of the churches of Brabant, they show a number of cannon balls, which, they say, the virgin Mary in some former war, caught in her muslin *apron* as they came roaring out of the cannon's mouth, to prevent their hurting the *saints* of her favorite army. She does no such feats now-a-days. Perhaps the reason is, that the infidels have taken away her muslin apron. They show also, between Montmartre and the village of St. Denis, several places where they say St. Denis stopt with his head in his hands after it had been cut off at Montmartre. The Protestants will call those things lies; and where is the proof that all the other things called miracles are not as great lies as those.

[There appears to be an omission here in the copy.]

Christ, say those Cabalists, came in the *fulness of time*. And pray what is the fulness of time? The words admit of no idea. They are perfectly Cabalistical. Time is a word invented to describe to our conception a greater or less portion of eternity. It may be a minute, a portion of eternity measured by the vibration of a pendulum of a certain length;—it may be a day, a year, a hundred, or a thousand years, or any other quantity. Those portions are only greater or less comparatively.

The word fulness applies not to any of them. The idea of fulness of time cannot be conceived. A woman with child and ready for delivery, as Mary was when Christ was born, may be said to have gone her full time; but it is the woman that is full, not time.

It may also be said figuratively, in certain cases, that the times are full of events; but time itself is incapable of being

full of itself. Ye hypocrites! learn to speak intelligible language.

It happened to be a time of peace when they say Christ was born; and what then? There had been many such intervals; and have been many such since. Time was no fuller in any of them than in the other. If he were he would be fuller now than he ever was before. If he was full then he must be bursting now. But peace or war have relation to circumstances, and not to time; and those Cabalists would be at as much loss to make out any meaning to fulness of circumstances, as to fulness of time; and if they could, it would be fatal; for fulness of circumstances would mean, when there are no more circumstances to happen; and fulness of time when there is no more time to follow.

Christ, therefore, like every other person, was neither in the fulness of one nor the other.

But though we cannot conceive the idea of fulness of time, because we cannot have conception of a time when there shall be no time; nor of fulness of circumstances, because we cannot conceive a state of existence to be without circumstances; we can often see, after a thing is past, if any circumstance, necessary to give the utmost activity and success to that thing, was wanting at the time that thing took place. If such a circumstance was wanting, we may be certain that the thing which took place, was not a thing of God's ordaining; whose work is always perfect, and his means perfect means. They tell us that Christ was the Son of God; in that case, he would have known everything; and he came upon earth to make known the will of God to man throughout the whole earth. If this had been true, Christ would have known and would have been furnished with all the possible means of doing it; and would have instructed mankind, or at least his apostles, in the use of such of the means as they could use themselves to facilitate the accomplishment of the mission; consequently he would have instructed them in the art of printing, for the press is the tongue of the world; and without which, his or their preaching was less than a whistle compared to thunder. Since, then, he did not do this, he had not the means necessary to the mission; and consequently had not the mission.

They tell us in the book of Acts, chap. ii., a very stupid story of the apostles' having the gift of tongues; and *cloven tongues of fire* descended and sat upon each of them. Perhaps

it was this story of cloven tongues that gave rise to the notion of slitting Jackdaws' tongues to make them talk. Be that however as it may, the gift of tongues, even if it were true, would be but of little use without the art of printing. I can sit in my chamber, as I do while writing this, and by the aid of printing, can send the thoughts I am writing through the greatest part of Europe, to the East Indies, and over all North America, in a few months. Jesus Christ and his apostles could not do this. They had not the means, and the want of means detects the pretended mission.

There are three modes of communication. Speaking, writing and printing. The first is exceedingly limited. A man's voice can be heard but a few yards of distance; and his person can be but in one place.

Writing is much more extensive; but the thing written cannot be multiplied but at great expense, and the multiplication will be slow and incorrect. Were there no other means of circulating what priests call the word of God (the Old and New Testament) than by writing copies, those copies could not be purchased at less than forty pounds sterling each; consequently but few people could purchase them, while the writers could scarcely obtain a livelihood by it. But the art of printing changes all the cases, and opens a scene as vast as the world. It gives to man a sort of divine attribute. It gives to him mental omnipresence. He can be everywhere and at the same instant; for wherever he is read he is mentally there.

The case applies not only against the pretending mission of Christ and his apostles, but against everything that priests call the word of God, and against all those who pretend to deliver it; for had God ever delivered any verbal word, he would have taught the means of communicating it. The one without the other is inconsistent with the wisdom we conceive of the Creator.

The third chapter of Genesis, verse 21, tells us that *God made coats of skins and clothed* Adam and Eve. It was infinitely more important that man should be taught the art of printing, than that Adam should be taught to make a pair of leather breeches, or his wife a petticoat.

There is another matter, equally striking and important, that connects itself with those observations against this pretended word of God, this manufactured book, called *Revealed Religion.*

We know that whatever is of God's doing is unalterable by man

beyond the laws which the Creator has ordained. We cannot make a tree grow with the root in the air and the fruit in the ground; we cannot make iron into gold nor gold into iron; we cannot make rays of light shine forth rays of darkness, nor darkness shine forth light. If there were such a thing, as a word of God, it would possess the same properties which all his other works do. It would resist destructive alteration. But we see that the book which they call the word of God has not this property. That book says, Genesis, chap. i. verse 27, "*So God created man in his own image;*" but the printer can make it say, *So man created God in his own image.* The words are passive to every transposition of them, or can be annihilated and others put in their places. This is not the case with anything that is of God's doing; and, therefore, this book, called the word of God, tried by the same universal rule which every other of God's works within our reach can be tried by, proves itself to be a forgery.

The bishop says, that "*miracles are a proper proof of a divine mission.*" Admitted. But we know that men, and especially priests, can tell lies and call them miracles. It is therefore necessary, that the thing called a miracle be proved to be true, and also to be miraculous; before it can be admitted as proof of the thing called revelation.

The bishop must be a bad logician not to know that one doubtful thing cannot be admitted as proof that another doubtful thing is true. It would be like attempting to prove a liar not to be a liar by the evidence of another, who is as great a liar as himself.

Though Jesus Christ, by being ignorant of the art of printing, shows he had not the means necessary to a divine mission, and consequently had no such mission; it does not follow that if he had known that art, the divinity of what they call his mission would be proved thereby, any more than it proved the divinity of the man who invented printing. Something therefore beyond printing, even if he had known it, was necessary *as a miracle*, to have proved that what he delivered was the word of God; and this was that the book in which that word should be contained, which is now called the Old and New Testament, should possess the miraculous property, distinct from all human books, of resisting alteration. This would be not only a miracle, but an ever-existing and universal miracle; whereas, those which they tell us of, even if they had been true, were momentary and

local; they would leave no trace behind, after the lapse of a few years, of having ever existed; but this would prove, in all ages and in all places, the book to be divine and not human; as effectually, and as conveniently, as aquafortis proves gold to be gold by not being capable of acting upon it; and detects all other metals and all counterfeit composition, by dissolving them. Since then the only miracle capable of every proof is wanting, and which everything that is of a divine origin possesses; all the tales of miracles with which the Old and New Testament are filled, are fit only for impostors to preach and fools to believe.

LETTER TO MR. ERSKINE.*

Of all the tyrannies that afflict mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst; every other species of tyranny is limited to the world we live in; but this attempts a stride beyond the grave, and seeks to pursue us into eternity. It is there and not here —it is to God and not to man—it is to a heavenly and not to an earthly tribunal that we are to account for our belief; if then we believe falsely and dishonorably of the Creator, and that belief is forced upon us, as far as force can operate by human laws and human tribunals,—on whom is the criminality of that belief to fall? on those who impose it, or on those on whom it is imposed?

A bookseller of the name of Williams has been prosecuted in London on a charge of blasphemy, for publishing a book entitled the "Age of Reason." Blasphemy is a word of vast sound, but equivocal and almost indefinite signification, unless we confine it to the simple idea of hurting or injuring the reputation of anyone, which was its original meaning. As a word, it existed before Christianity existed, being a Greek word, or Greek anglified, as all the etymological dictionaries will show.

But behold how various and contradictory has been the signification and application of this equivocal word. Socrates, who lived more than four hundred years before the Christian era, was convicted of blasphemy, for preaching against the belief of a plurality of gods, and for preaching the belief of one god, and was condemned to suffer death by poison. Jesus Christ was convicted of blasphemy under the Jewish law, and was crucified. Calling Mahomet an impostor would be blasphemy in Turkey; and denying the infallibility of the Pope, and the Church, would be blasphemy at Rome. What then is to be

* Mr. Paine has evidently incorporated into this Letter a portion of his answer to Bishop Watson's "Apology for the Bible;" as in a chapter of that work, treating of the Book of Genesis, he expressly refers to his remarks, in a preceding part of the same, on the two accounts of the creation contained in that book; which is included in this letter.

understood by this word blasphemy? We see that in the case of Socrates truth was condemned as blasphemy. Are we sure that truth is not blasphemy in the present day? Woe, however, be to those who make it so, whoever they may be.

A book called the Bible has been voted by men, and decreed by human laws to be the word of God; and the disbelief of this is called blasphemy. But if the Bible be not the word of God, it is the laws and the execution of them that is blasphemy, and not the disbelief. Strange stories are told of the Creator in that book. He is represented as acting under the influence of every human passion, even of the most malignant kind. If these stories are false, we err in believing them to be true, and ought not to believe them. It is, therefore, a duty which every man owes to himself, and reverentially to his Maker, to ascertain, by every possible inquiry, whether there be sufficient evidence to believe them or not.

My own opinion is, decidedly, that the evidence does not warrant the belief, and that we sin in forcing that belief upon ourselves and upon others. In saying this, I have no other object in view than truth. But that I may not be accused of resting upon bare assertion with respect to the equivocal state of the Bible, I will produce an example, and I will not pick and cull the Bible for the purpose. I will go fairly to the case: I will take the two first chapters of Genesis as they stand, and show from thence the truth of what I say, that is, that the evidence does not warrant the belief that the Bible is the word of God.

CHAPTER I.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, Let there be light; and there was light.
4. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.
5. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day.
6. ¶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters

which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8. And God called the firmament heaven: and the evening and the morning were the second day.

9. ¶ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas, and God saw that it was good.

11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb, yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14. ¶ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.

15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also.

17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth,

18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.

19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20. ¶ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24. ¶ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living

creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26. ¶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.*

28. *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth.*

29. ¶ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat.

30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat; and it was so.

31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

CHAPTER II.

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

---

4. ¶ These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created; in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

5. And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field, before it grew; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, *and there was not a man to till the ground.*

6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward of Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden: and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx-stone.

13. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14. And the name of the third river is Heddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.

16. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

18. ¶ And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.

19. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air; and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.

22. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.

24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.

25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

These two chapters are called the Mosaic account of the creation; and we are told, nobody knows by whom, that Moses was instructed by God to write that account.

It has happened that every nation of people has been world-makers; and each makes the world to begin his own way, as if they had all been brought up, as Hudibras says, to the trade. There are hundreds of different opinions and traditions how the world began.* My business, however, in this place, is only with those two chapters.

---

* In this world-making trade, man, of course, has held a conspicuous place; and, for the gratification of the curious inquirer, the editor subjoins two specimens of the opinions of learned men, in regard to the manner of his formation, and of his subsequent fall. The first he extracts from the Talmud, a work containing the Jewish traditions, the rabbinical constitutions, and explication of the law; and is of great authority among the Jews. It was composed by certain learned rabbins, comprehends twelve bulky folios, and forty years are said to have been consumed in its compilation. In fact, it is deemed to contain the *whole body of divinity* for the Jewish nation. Although the Scriptures tell us that *the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground*, they do not explain the manner in which it was done, and these doctors supply the deficiency as follows:—

"Adam's *body* was made of the earth of Babylon, his *head* of the land of Israel, his other *members* of other parts of the world. R. Meir thought he was compact of the earth, gathered out of the whole earth; as it is written, *thine eyes did see my substance.* Now it is elsewhere written, *the eyes of the Lord are over all the earth.* R. Aha expressly marks the twelve hours in which his various parts were formed. His stature was from one end of the world to the other; and it was for his transgression that the Creator, laying his hand in anger on him, lessened him; for before, says R. Eleazer, with his hand he reached the firmament. R. Jehuda thinks his sin was heresy; but R. Isaac thinks it was nourishing his foreskin."

The Mahometan savans give the following account of the same transaction:—

"When God wished to create man, he sent the angel Gabriel to take a

I begin then by saying, that those two chapters, instead of containing, as has been believed, one continued account of the

handful of each of the seven beds which composed the earth. But when the latter heard the order of God, she felt much alarmed, and requested the heavenly mesenger to represent to God, that as the creature he was about to form might chance to rebel one day against him, this would be the means of bringing upon herself the divine malediction. God, however, far from listening to this request, despatched two other angels, Michael and Azrael, to execute his will; but they, moved with compassion, were prevailed upon again to lay the complaints of the earth at the feet of her author. Then God confined the execution of his commands to the formidable Azrael alone, who, regardless of all the earth might say, violently tore from her bosom seven handfuls from her various strata, and carried them into Arabia, where the work of creation was to be completed. As to Azrael, God was so well pleased with the decisive manner in which he had acted, that he gave him the office of separating the soul from the body, whence he is called the Angel of Death.

' Meanwhile, the angels having kneaded this earth, God moulded it with his own hands, and left it sometime that it might get dry. The angels delighted to gaze upon the lifeless, but beautiful mass, with the exception of Eblis, or Lucifer, who, bent upon evil, struck it upon the stomach, which giving a hollow sound, he said, since this creature will be hollow, it will often need being filled, and will be, therefore, exposed to pregnant temptations. Upon this, he asked the angels how they would act if God wished to render them dependent npon this sovereign which he was about to give to the earth. They readily answered that they would obey; but though Eblis did not openly dissent, he resolved within himself that he would not follow their example.

"After the body of the first man had been properly prepared, God animated it with an intelligent soul, and clad him in splendid and marvellous garments, suited to the dignity of this favored being. He now commanded his angels to fall prostrate before Adam. All of them obeyed, with the exception of Eblis, who was in consequence immediately expelled from heaven, and his place given to Adam.

"The formation of Eve from one of the ribs of the first man, is the same as that recorded in the Bible, as is also the order given to the father of mankind, not to taste the fruit of a particular tree. Eblis seized this opportunity of revenge. Having associated the peacock and the serpent in the enterprise, they by their wily speeches at length persuaded Adam to become guilty of disobedience. But no sooner had they touched the forbidden fruit, than their garments dropped on the ground, and the sight of their nakedness covered them both with shame and with confusion. They made a covering for their body with fig-leaves; but they were both immediately condemned to labor, and to die, and hurled down from Paradise.

"Adam fell upon the mountain of Sarendip, in the Island of Ceylon, where a mountain is called by his name to the present day. Eve being separated from her spouse in her fall, alighted on the spot where China now stands, and Eblis fell not far from the same spot. As to the peacock and the snake, the former dropped in Hindostan and the latter in Arabia. Adam soon feeling the enormity of his fault, implored the mercy of God, who, relenting, sent down his angels from heaven with a tabernacle, which they placed on the spot where Abraham, at a subsequent period, built the temple of Mecca. Gabriel instructed him in the rites and ceremonies performed about the sanctuary, in order that he might obtain the forgiveness of his offence, and afterwards led him to the mountain of Ararat, where he met Eve, from whom he had been now separated above two hundred years."

creation, written by Moses, contain two different and contradictory stories of a creation, made by two different persons, and written in two different styles of expression. The evidence that shows this is so clear, when attended to without prejudice, that, did we meet with the same evidence in any Arabic or Chinese account of a creation, we should not hesitate in pronouncing it a forgery.

I proceed to distinguish the two stories from each other.

The first story begins at the first verse of the first chapter, and ends at the end of the third verse of the second chapter; for the adverbial conjunction, THUS, with which the second chapter begins (as the reader will see), connects itself to the last verse of the first chapter, and those three verses belong to, and make the conclusion of the first story.

The second story begins at the fourth verse of the second chapter, and ends with that chapter. Those two stories have been confused into one, by cutting off the three last verses of the first story, and throwing them to the second chapter.

I go now to show that those two stories have been written by two different persons.

From the first verse of the first chapter to the end of the third verse of the second chapter, which makes the whole of the first story, the word GOD is used without any epithet or additional word conjoined with it, as the reader will see: and this style of expression is invariably used throughout the whole of this story, and is repeated no less than thirty-five times, viz., "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth, and the spirit of GOD moved on the face of the waters, and GOD said, let there be light, and GOD saw the light," &c., &c.

But immediately from the beginning of the fourth verse of the second chapter, where the second story begins, the style of expression is always the *Lord God*, and this style of expression is invariably used to the end of the chapter, and is repeated eleven times; in the one it is always GOD, and never the *Lord God*, in the other it is always the *Lord God*, and never GOD. The first story contains thirty-four verses, and repeats the single word GOD thirty-five times. The second story contains twenty-two verses and repeats the compound word *Lord-God* eleven times; this difference of style, so often repeated, and so uniformly continued, shows that those two chapters, containing two different stories, are written by different persons. It is the same in all different editions of the Bible, in all the languages I have seen.

Having thus shown, from the difference of style, that those two chapters divided, as they properly divide themselves, at the end of the third verse of the second chapter, are the work of two different persons, I come to show, from the contradictory matters they contain, that they cannot be the work of one person, and are two different stories.

It is impossible, unless the writer was a lunatic, without memory, that one and the same person could say, as is said in the 27th and 28th verses of the first chapter—"*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them; and God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and every living thing that moveth on the face of the earth.*" It is, I say, impossible that the same person who said this, could afterwards say, as is said in the second chapter, ver. 5, *and there was not a man to till the ground;* and then proceed in the 7th verse to give another account of the making a man for the first time, and afterwards of the making a woman out of his rib.

Again, one and the same person could not write, as is written in the 29th verse of the first chapter: "Behold I (God) have given you every herb bearing seed, which is on the face of the earth; and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree bearing seed, to you it shall be for meat," and afterwards say, as is said in the second chapter, that the Lord God planted a tree in the midst of a garden, and forbad man to eat thereof.

Again, one and the same person could not say, *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made;* and shortly after set the Creator to work again, to plant a garden, to make a man and a woman, &c., as is done in the second chapter.

Here are evidently two different stories contradicting each other.—According to the first, the two sexes, the male and the female, were made at the same time. According to the second, they were made at different times, the man first, the woman afterwards.—According to the first story they were to have dominion over all the earth. According to the second, their dominion was limited to a garden. How large a garden it could be that one man and one woman could dress and keep in order, I leave to the prosecutor, the judge, the jury, and Mr. Erskine to determine.

The story of the talking serpent, and its *tete-à-tete* with Eve; the doleful adventure called the *Fall of Man;* and how he was turned out of his fine garden, and how the garden was afterwards locked up and guarded by a flaming sword (if any one can tell what a flaming sword is), belonging altogether to the second story. They have no connection with the first story. According to the first there was no garden of Eden; no forbidden tree: the scene was the whole earth, and the fruit of all the trees was allowed to be eaten.

In giving this example of the strange state of the Bible, it cannot be said I have gone out of my way to seek it, for I have taken the beginning of the book; nor can it be said I have made more of it, than it makes itself. That there are two stories is as visible to the eye, when attended to, as that there are two chapters, and that they have been written by different persons, nobody knows by whom. If this then is the strange condition the beginning of the Bible is in, it leads to a just suspicion, that the other parts are no better, and consequently it becomes every man's duty to examine the case. I have done it for myself, and am satisfied that the Bible is *fabulous*.

Perhaps I shall be told in the cant-language of the day, as I have often been told by the Bishop of Llandaff and others, of the great and laudable pains that many pious and learned men have taken to explain the obscure and reconcile the contradictory, or as they say, the *seemingly contradictory* passages of the Bible. It is because the Bible needs such an undertaking, that is one of the first causes to suspect it is NOT the word of God; this single reflection, when carried home to the mind, is in itself a volume.

What! does not the Creator of the Universe, the Fountain of all Wisdom, the Origin of all Science, the Author of all Knowledge, the God of Order, and of Harmony, know how to write? When we contemplate the vast economy of the creation; when we behold the unerring regularity of the visible solar system, the perfection with which all its several parts revolve, and by corresponding assemblage, form a whole;—when we launch our eye into the boundless ocean of space, and see ourselves surrounded by innumerable worlds, not one of which varies from its appointed place—when we trace the power of the Creator, from a mite to an elephant—from an atom to an universe—can we suppose that the mind that could conceive such a design, and the power that executed it with incomparable

perfection, cannot write without inconsistency; or, that a book so written, can be the work of such a power? The writings of Thomas Paine, even of Thomas Paine, need no commentator to explain, expound, arrange, and re-arrange their several parts, to render them intelligible—he can relate a fact, or write an essay, without forgetting in one page what he has written in another—certainly, then, did the God of all perfection condescend to write or dictate a book, that book would be as perfect as himself is perfect; the Bible is not so, and it is confessedly not so, by the attempts to amend it.

Perhaps I shall be told, that though I have produced one instance, I cannot produce another of equal force. One is sufficient to call in question the genuineness of authenticity of any book that pretends to be the word of God; for such a book would, as before said, be as perfect as its author is perfect.

I will, however, advance only four chapters further into the the book of Genesis, and produce another example that is sufficient to invalidate the story to which it belongs.

We have all heard of Noah's Flood; and it is impossible to think of the whole human race, men, women, children, and infants (except one family,) deliberately drowning, without feeling a painful sensation; that heart must be a heart of flint that can contemplate such a scene with tranquillity. There is nothing in the ancient mythology, nor in the religion of any people we know of upon the globe, that records a sentence of their God, or of their Gods, so tremendously severe and merciless. If the story be not true, we blasphemously dishonor God by believing it, and still more so, in forcing, by laws and penalties, that belief upon others. I go now to show, from the face of the story, that it carries the evidence of not being true.

I know not if the judge, the jury, and Mr. Erskine, who tried and convicted Williams, ever read the Bible, or know anything of its contents, and, therefore, I will state the case precisely.

There was no such people as Jews or Israelites, in the time that Noah is said to have lived, and consequently there was no such law as that which is called the Jewish or Mosaic Law. It is according to the Bible, more than six hundred years from the time the flood is said to have happened, to the time of Moses, and consequently the time the flood is said to have happened, was more than six hundred years prior to the law, called the law of Moses, even admitting Moses to have been the giver of that law, of which there is great cause to doubt.

We have here two different epochs, or points of time; that of the flood, and that of the law of Moses; the former more than six hundred years prior to the latter. But the maker of the story of the flood, whoever he was, has betrayed himself by blundering, for he has reversed the order of the times. He has told the story, as if the law of Moses was prior to the flood; for he has made God to say to Noah, Genesis, chap. vii. ver. 2, "Of every clean beast, thou shalt take unto thee by sevens, male and his female, and of beasts that are *not clean* by two, the male and his female." This is the Mosaic law, and could only be said after that law was given, not before. There was no such things as beasts clean and unclean in the time of Noah —It is nowhere said they were created so.—They were only *declared* to be so, *as meats*, by the Mosaic law, and that to the Jews only, and there was no such people as Jews in the time of Noah. This is the blundering condition in which this strange story stands.

When we reflect on a sentence so tremendously severe, as that of consigning the whole human race, eight persons excepted, to deliberate drowning; a sentence, which represents the Creator in a more merciless character than any of those whom we call Pagans, ever represented the Creator to be, under the figure of any of their deities, we ought at least to suspend our belief of it, on a comparison of the beneficent character of the Creator, with the tremendous severity of the sentence; but when we see the story told with such an evident contradiction of circumstances, we ought to set it down for nothing better than a fable, told by nobody knows whom, and nobody knows when.

It is a relief to the genuine and sensible soul of man to find the story unfounded. It frees us from two painful sensations at once; that of having hard thoughts of the Creator, on account of the severity of the sentence; and that of sympathising in the horrid tragedy of a drowning world. He who cannot feel the force of what I mean, is not, in my estimation of character, worthy the name of a human being.

I have just said there is great cause to doubt, if the law, called the law of Moses, was given by Moses; the books called the books of Moses, which contained, among other things, what is called the Mosaic law, are put in front of the Bible, in the manner of a constitution, with a history annexed to it. Had these books been written by Moses, they would undoubtedly have been the oldest books in the Bible, and entitled to be placed first, and the

law and the history they contain would be frequently referred to in the books that follow; but this is not the case. From the time of Othniel, the first of the Judges (Judges, chap. iii. ver. 9), to the end of the book of Judges, which contains a period of four hundred and ten years, this law, and those books, were not in practice, nor known among the Jews, nor are they so much as alluded to throughout the whole of that period. And if the reader will examine the 22nd and 23rd chapters of the 3rd Book of Kings, and 34th chapter 2nd Chron. he will find that no such law, nor any such books were known in the time of the Jewish monarchy, and that the Jews were Pagans during the whole of that time, and of their Judges.

The first time the law, called the law of Moses, made its appearance, was in the time of Josiah, about a thousand years after Moses was dead: it is then said to have been found by accident. The account of this finding, or pretended finding, is given 2nd Chron., chap. xxxiv. ver. 14, 15, 16, 18: "Hilkiah the priest *found* the book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses, and Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan carried the book to the king, and Shaphan told the king (Josiah), saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book."

In consequence of this finding, which much resembles that of poor Chatterton finding manuscript poems of Rowley, the monk, in the cathedral church at Bristol, or the late finding of manuscripts of Shakspeare in an old chest (two well known frauds), Josiah abolished the Pagan religion of the Jews, massacred all the Pagan priests, though he himself had been a Pagan, as the reader will see in the 23rd chap. 2nd Kings, and thus established in blood, the law that is there called the law of Moses, and instituted a passover in commemoration thereof. The 22nd verse, speaking of this passover, says, "Surely there was not held such a passover from the days of the Judges, that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor the kings of Judah;" and the 25th ver. in speaking of this priest-killing Josiah, says, "*Like unto him, there was no king before him*, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; *neither after him arose there any like him.*" This verse, like the former one, is a general declaration against all the preceding kings without exception. It is also a declaration against all that reigned after

him, of which there were four, the whole time of whose reigning makes but twenty-two years and six months, before the Jews were entirely broken up as a nation and their monarchy destroyed. It is, therefore, evident that the law, called the law of Moses, of which the Jews talk so much, was promulgated and established only in the latter time of the Jewish monarchy; and it is very remarkable, that no sooner had they established it than they were a destroyed people, as if they were punished for acting an imposition and affixing the name of the Lord to it, and massacring their former priests under the pretence of religion. The sum of the history of the Jews is this—they continued to be a nation about a thousand years, they then established a law, which they called the *law of the Lord given by Moses*, and were destroyed. This is not opinion, but historical evidence.

Levi, the Jew, who has written an answer to the "Age of Reason," gives a strange account of the law called the law of Moses.

In speaking of the story of the sun and moon standing still, that the Israelites might cut the throats of all their enemies, and hang all their kings, as told in Joshua, chap. x., he says, "There is also another proof of the reality of this miracle, which is, the appeal that the author of the book of Joshua makes to the book of Jasher, '*Is not this written in the book of Jasher?*' Hence," continues Levi, "it is manifest that the book commonly called the book of Jasher, existed, and was well known at the time the book of Joshua was written; and pray, Sir," continues Levi, "what book do you think this was? *why, no other then the law of Moses!*" Levi, like the Bishop of Llandaff and many other guess-work commentators, either forgets or does not know what there is in one part of the Bible when he is giving his opinion upon another part.

I did not, however, expect to find so much ignorance in a Jew with respect to the history of his nation, though I might not be surprised at it in a bishop. If Levi will look into the account given in the first chap. 2nd book of Sam. of the Amalekite slaying Saul, and bringing the crown and bracelets to David, he will find the following recital, ver. 15, 17, 18: "And David called one of the young men, and said, go near and fall upon him (the Amalekite), and he smote him that he died: and David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son; also he bade them teach the children the use of the bow;—*behold it is written in the book of Jasher.*" If the book

of Jasher were what Levi calls it, the law of Moses, written by Moses, it is not possible that anything that David said or did could be written in that law, since Moses died more than five hundred years before David was born; and, on the other hand, admitting the book of Jasher to be the law called the law of Moses; that law must have been written more than five hundred years after Moses was dead, or it could not relate anything said or done by David. Levi may take which of these cases he pleases, for both are against him.

I am not going in the course of this letter to write a commentary on the Bible. The two instances I have produced, and which are taken from the beginning of the Bible, show the necessity of examining it. It is a book that has been read more, and examined less, than any book that ever existed. Had it come to us an Arabic or Chinese book, and said to have been a sacred book by the people from whom it came, no apology would have been made for the confused and disorderly state it is in. The tales it relates of the Creator would have been censured, and our pity excited for those who believed them. We should have vindicated the goodness of God against such a book, and preached up the disbelief of it out of reverence to him. Why then do we not act as honorably by the Creator in the one case as we do in the other. As a Chinese book we would have examined it;—ought we not then to examine it as a Jewish book? The Chinese are a people who have all the appearance of far greater antiquity than the Jews; and in point of permanency there is no comparison. They are also a people of mild manners and good morals, except where they have been corrupted by European commerce. Yet we take the word of a restless, bloody-minded people, as the Jews of Palestine were, when we would reject the same authority from a better people. We ought to see it is habit and prejudice that have prevented people from examining the Bible. Those of the church of England called it holy, because the Jews called it so, and because custom and certain acts of parliament call it so, and they read it from custom. Dissenters read it for the purpose of doctrinal controversy, and are very fertile in discoveries and inventions. But none of them read it for the pure purpose of information, and of rendering justice to the Creator, by examining if the evidence it contains warrants the belief of its being what it is called. Instead of doing this, they take it blindfolded, and will have it to be the word of God whether it be so or not. For my

own part, my belief in the perfection of the Deity will not permit me to believe, that a book so manifestly obscure, disorderly, and contradictory, can be his work. I can write a better book myself. This disbelief in me proceeds from my belief in the Creator. I cannot pin my faith upon the *say so* of Hilkiah, the priest, who said he found it, or any part of it, nor upon Shaphan the scribe, nor upon any priests, nor any scribe or man of the law, of the present day.

As to acts of parliament, there are some which say there are witches and wizards; and the persons who made those acts (it was in the time of James the First), made also some acts which call the Bible Holy Scriptures, or Word of God. But act of parliament decide nothing with respect to God; and as these acts of parliament making were wrong with respect to witches and wizards, they may also be wrong with respect to the book in question.* It is, therefore, necessary that the book be exam-

* It is afflicting to humanity to reflect that, after the blood shed to establish the *divinity* of the Jewish scriptures, it should have become necessary to grant a new *dispensation*, which, through unbelief and conflicting opinions respecting its true construction, has cost as great or greater sacrifices than the former. Catholics, when they had the ascendency, burnt Protestants, who, in turn, led Catholics to the stake, and both united in exterminating Dissenters. The Dissenters, when they had the power, pursued the same course. The diabolical act of Calvin, in the burning of Dr. Servetus, is an awful witness of this fact. Servetus suffered two hours in a slow fire before life was extinct. The Dissenters, who escaped from England, had scarcely seated themselves in the wilds of America, before they began to exterminate from the territory they had seized upon, all those who did not profess what they called the *orothodox faith*. Priests, Quakers, and Adamites, were prohibited from entering the territory, on pain of death. By priests, they meant clergymen of the Roman Catholic, if not also of the Protestant or Episcopal persuasion. Their own priests they denominated ministers. These puritans also, particularly in the province of Massachusetts-Bay, put many persons to death on the charge of witchcraft. There is no account, however, of their having burned any alive, as was done in Scotland, about the same period in which the executions took place in Massachusetts-Bay. In England, Sir Matthew Hale, a judge eminent for *extraordinary piety*, condemned two women to death on the same charge.

I doubt, however, if there be any acts of the parliament now in force for inflicting pains and penalties for denying the scriptures to be the word of God, as our *upright* judges seem to rely at this time wholly upon what they call the common law, to justify the horrid persecutions which are now carried on in England, to the disgrace of a country that boasts so much of its tolerant spirit.

As the common law is derived from the customs of our ancestors, when in a rude and barbarous condition, it is not surprising that many of its injunctions should be opposed to the ideas, which a society in a civilized and refined state, should deem compatible with justice and right. Accordingly we find that government has from time to time annulled some of its most prominent absurdities; such as the trials by ordeal, the wager of battle in

ined ; it is our duty to examine it ; and to suppress the right of examination is sinful in any government, or in any judge or jury. The Bible makes God to say to Moses, Deut. chap. vii.

---

case of appeal for murder, under a belief that a supernatural power would interfere to save the innocent and destroy the guilty in such a combat, &c. Yet much remains nearly as ridiculous, that requires a further and more liberal use of the pruning knife.

"In the days of the Stuarts [A.D. 1670, 22nd year of Charles II. See "The Republicans," vol. 5, p. 22] William Penn was indicted at Common Law for a riot and breach of the peace on having delivered his sentiments to a congregation of people in Grace-church-street : he told the judge and the jury that Common Law was an abuse, and no law at all; and in spite of the threats, the fines and imprisonments inflicted on his jury, they acquitted him on this plea. William Penn found an honest jury."

The introduction, however, of Christianity, as composing a part of this Common Law (bad as much of it is), is proved to be a fraud or misconception of the old Norman French ; as I shall show by an extract of a letter from Thomas Jefferson to Major Cartwright, bearing date 5th June, 1824.

For a more full development of this subject, see "Sampson's Anniversary Discourse, before the Historical Society of New York."—EDITOR.

Extract from Jefferson's Letter.

"I am glad to find in your book ["The English Constitution, produced and illustrated"] a formal contradiction, at length, of the judiciary usurpation of legislative power ; for such the judges have usurped in their repeated decisions, that *Christianity is a part of the common law.* The proof of the contrary, which you have adduced, is uncontrovertible : to wit, that the common law existed while the Anglo-Saxons were yet Pagans ; at a time when they had never yet heard the name of Christ pronounced, or knew that such a character had ever existed. But it may amuse you to show when, and by what means, they stole this law in upon us. In a case of *Quare Impedit*, in the "Year Book," 34 Henry VI. fo. 28 [Anno 1458], a question was made how far the ecclesiastical law was to be respected in a common law court. And Prisot, Chief Justice, gave his opinion in these words :—'A tiel leis, que ils de saint eglise ont en *ancien scripture*, covient a nous a donner credence : cal ceo Commen Ley sur quels touts manners leis sont foddes. Et auxy, Sir, nous sumus obliges de conustre lour ley de saint eglise : et semblablement ils sont obliges de conustre nostre ley.—Et, Sir, si poit apperer or a nous que l'evesque adfait come un ordinary fera en tiel cas, adong nous devons ceo adjuger bon, ou auterment nemy,'" &c. ["To such laws as they of holy church have in ancient writing, it behoves us give credence : for it is that common law upon which all kinds of law are founded ; and therefore, Sir, are we bound to know their law of holy church, and in like manner are they obliged to know our laws. And, Sir, if it should appear now to us, that the bishop had done what an ordinary ought to do in like case, then we should adjudge it good, and not otherwise."]—The canons of the church anciently were incorporated with the laws of the land, and of the same authority. See Dr. Henry's Hist. G. Britain.—EDITOR.

See S. C. Fitzh. abr. qu. imp. 89. Bro. abr. qu. imp. 12. Finch in his 1st Book, c. 3, is the first afterwards who quotes the case, and mis-states it thus : "'To such laws of the church as have warrant in *Holy Scripture*, our law giveth credence,' and cites Prisot ; mistranslating '*ancient* Scripture' into '*holy* Scripture ;' whereas Prisot palpably says, 'to such laws as those of holy church have in *ancient writing*, it is proper for us to give credence ;' to wit—to their *ancient written* laws. This was in 1613, a century and a half

ver. 2, "And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, *nor show mercy unto them.*" Not all the priests, nor scribes, nor tribunals in the world, nor all the authority of man, shall make me believe that God ever gave such a *Robespierrean precept* as that of showing *no mercy;* and consequently it is impossible that I, or any person who believes as reverentially of the Creator as I do, can believe such a book to be the word of God.

There have been, and still are, those, who, whilst they *profess* to believe the Bible to be the work of God, affect to turn it into ridicule. Taking their profession and conduct together, they act blasphemously; because they act as if *God himself* was not to be believed. The case is exceedingly different with respect to the "Age of Reason." That book is written to show from the Bible itself, that there is abundant matter to suspect it is not the word of God, and that we have been imposed upon, first by Jews, and afterwards by priests and commentators.

Not one of those who have attempted to write answers to the

---

after the dictum of Prisot.—Wingate, in 1658, erects this false translation into a maxim of the common law, copying the words of Finch, but citing Prisot. Wingate, max. 3, and Sheppard, title 'Religion,' in 1675, copies the same mistranslation, quoting the Y. B. Finch and Wingate. Hale expresses it in these words: 'Christianity is parcel of the law of England'—1 Ventris 293. Keb. 607, but quotes no authority. By these echoings and re-echoings from one to another, it had become so established in 1728, that in the case of the King vs. Woolston. 2 Stra. 834, the court would not suffer it to be debated, whether to write against Christianity was punishable in the temporal court at common law. Wood, therefore, 409, ventures still to vary the phrase, and say, 'that all blasphemy and profaneness are offences by the common law;' and cites 2 Stra.—Then Blackstone, 1763, iv. 59, repeats the words of Hale, that 'Christianity is part of the law of England,' citing Ventris and Strange. And finally, Lord Mansfield, with a little qualification, in Evans' case in 1767, says, that 'the essential principles of *revealed* religion are part of the common law'—thus ingulfing Bible, Testament, and all into the common law, without citing any authority. And thus we find this chain of authorities hanging, link by link, one upon another, and all ultimately on one and the same hook, and *that* a mistranslation of the words, '*ancient scripture,*' used by Prisot. Finch quotes Prisot; Wingate does the same; Sheppard quotes Prisot, Finch and Wingate. Hale cites nobody. The court, on Woolston's case, cites Hale; Wood cites Woolston's case; Blackstone quotes Woolston's case and Hale; and Lord Mansfield, like Hale, ventures it on his own authority. Here I might defy the best read lawyer to produce another scrip of authority for this *judiciary forgery*; and I might go on farther to show how some of the Anglo-Saxon priests interpolated into the text of Alfred's laws the 20th, 21st, 22d, and 23d chapters of Exodus, and the 15th of the Acts of the Apostles, from the 23rd to the 29th verses; but this would lead my pen and your patience too far. What a conspiracy this, between church and state!'"

"Age of Reason," have taken the ground upon which only an answer could be written. The case in question is not upon any point of doctrine, but altogether upon a matter of fact. Is the book called the Bible the word of God, or is it not? If it can be proved to be so, it ought to be believed as such; if not, it ought not be believed as such. This is the true state of the case. The "Age of Reason" produces evidence to show, and I have in this letter produced additional evidence that it is not the word of God. Those who take the contrary side should prove that it is. But this they have not done, nor attempted to do, and consequently they have done nothing to the purpose.

The prosecutors of Williams have shrunk from the point, as the answerers have done. They have availed themselves of prejudice instead of proof. If a writing was produced in a court of judicature, said to be the writing of a certain person, and upon the reality or non-reality of which, some matter at issue depended, the point to be proved would be, that such writing was the writing of such person. Or if the issue depended upon certain words, which some certain person was said to have spoken, the point to be proved would be, that such words were spoken by such person; and Mr. Erskine would contend the case upon this ground. A certain book is said to be the word of God. What is the proof that it is so? for upon this the whole depends; and if it cannot be proved to be so, the prosecution fails for want of evidence.

The prosecution against Williams charges him with publishing a book, entitled the "Age of Reason," which it says, is an impious blasphemous pamphlet, tending to ridicule and bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is more easy than to find abusive words, and English prosecutions are famous for this species of vulgarity. The charge, however, is sophistical; for the charge, as growing out of the pamphlet, should have stated, not as it now states, to ridicule and bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures, but to show, that the book called the Holy Scriptures are not the Holy Scriptures. It is one thing if I ridicule a work as being written by a certain person; but it is quite a different thing if I write to prove that such work was not written by such person. In the first case, I attack the person through the work; in the other case, I defend the honor of the person against the work. This is what the "Age of Reason" does, and consequently the charge in the indictment is sophistically stated. Every one will admit, that if the Bible be *not*

the word of God, we err in believing it to be his word, and ought not to believe it. Certainly, then, the ground the prosecution should take, would be to prove that the Bible is in fact what it is called. But this the prosecution has not done, and cannot do.

In all cases the prior fact must be proved, before the subsequent facts can be admitted in evidence. In a prosecution for adultery, the fact of marriage, which is the prior fact, must be proved, before the facts to prove adultery can be received. If the fact of marriage cannot be proved, adultery cannot be proved; and if the prosecution cannot prove the Bible to be the word of God, the charge of blasphemy is visionary and groundless.

In Turkey they might prove, if the case happened, that a certain book was bought of a certain bookseller, and that the said book was written against the Koran. In Spain and Portugal they might prove that a certain book was bought of a certain bookseller, and that the said book was written against the infallibility of the Pope. Under the ancient mythology they might have proved that a certain writing was bought of a certain person, and that the said writing was written against the belief of a plurality of gods, and in the support of the belief of one God. Socrates was condemned for a work of this kind.

All these are but subsequent facts, and amount to nothing, unless the prior facts be proved. The prior fact, with respect to the first case, is, Is the Koran the word of God? With respect to the second, Is the infallibility of the Pope a truth? With respect to the third, Is the belief of a plurality of gods a true belief? and in like manner with respect to the present prosecution, Is the book called the Bible the word of God? If the present prosecution prove no more than could be proved in any or all of these cases, it proves only as they do, or as an inquisition would prove; and in this view of the case, the prosecutors ought at least to leave off reviling that infernal institution, the inquisition. The prosecution, however, though it may injure the individual, may promote the cause of truth, because the manner in which it has been conducted, appears a confession to the world, that there is no evidence to prove that the Bible is the word of God. On what authority then do we believe the many strange stories that the Bible tells of God.

This prosecution has been carried on through the medium of

what is called a special jury, and the whole of a special jury is nominated by the master of the crown office. Mr. Erskine vaunts himself upon the bill he brought into parliament with respect to trials, for what the government party calls libels. But if in crown prosecutions, the master of the crown office is to continue to appoint the whole special jury, which he does by nominating the forty-eight persons from which the solicitor of each party is to strike out twelve, Mr Erskine's bill is only vapor and smoke. The root of the grievance lies in the manner of forming the jury, and to this Mr. Erskine's bill applies no remedy.

When the trial of Williams came on, only eleven of the special jurymen appeared, and the trial was adjourned. In cases where the whole number do not appear, it is customary to make up the deficiency by taking jurymen from persons present in court. This, in the law term, is called a *Tales*. Why was not this done in this case? Reason will suggest that they did not choose to depend on a man accidentally taken. When the trial recommenced the whole of the special jury appeared, and Williams was convicted; it is folly to contend a cause where the whole jury is nominated by one of the parties. I will relate a recent case that explains a great deal with respect to special juries in crown prosecution.

On the trial of Lambert and others, printers and proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle*, for a libel, a special jury was struck, on the prayer of the Attorney-General, who used to be called *Diabolus Regis*, or King's Devil.

Only seven or eight of the special jury appeared, and the Attorney-General not praying a *Tales*, the trial stood over to a future day; when it was to be brought on a second time, the Attorney-General prayed for a new special jury, but as this was not admissible, the original special jury was summoned. Only eight of them appeared, on which the Attorney-General said, "As I cannot, on a second trial, have a special jury, I will pray a *Tales*." Four persons were then taken from the persons present in court, and added to the eight special jurymen. The jury went out at two o'clock to consult on their verdict, and the judge (Kenyon) understanding they were divided, and likely to be some time in making up their minds, retired from the bench, and went home. At seven the jury went, attended by an officer of the court to the Judge's house, and delivered a verdict, "*Guilty of publishing, but with no malicious intention.*" The

Judge said, "*I cannot record this verdict: it is no verdict at all.*" The jury withdrew, and after sitting in consultation till five in the morning, brought in a verdict, Not Guilty. Would this have been the case had they been all special jurymen nominated by the Master of the Crown-office? This is one of the cases that ought to open the eyes of the people with respect to the manner of forming special juries.

On the trial of Williams, the Judge prevented the counsel for the defendant proceeding in the defence. The prosecution had selected a number of passages from the Age of Reason, and inserted them in the indictment. The defending counsel was selecting other passages to show, that the passages in the indictment were conclusions drawn from premises, and unfairly seperated therefrom in the indictment. The Judge said, *he did not know how to act;* meaning thereby whether to let the counsel proceed in the defence or not, and asked the jury if they wished to hear the passages read which the defending counsel had selected. The jury said NO, and the defending counsel was in consequence silent. Mr. Erskine then, Falstaff like, having all the field to himself, and no enemy at hand, laid about him most heroically, and the jury found the defendant *guilty.* I know not if Mr. Erskine ran out of court and hallooed, huzza for the Bible and the trial by jury.

Robespierre caused a decree to be passed during the trial of Brissot and others, that after a trial had lasted three days (the whole of which time in the case of Brissot, was taken up by the prosecuting party), the judge should ask the jury (who were then a packed jury) if they were satisfied. If the jury said YES, the trial ended, and the jury proceeded to give their verdict, without hearing the defence of the accused party. It needs no depth of wisdom to make an application of this case.

I will now state a case to show that the trial of Williams is not a trial, according to Kenyon's own explanation of law.

On a late trial in London (Selthens *versus* Hoossman) on a policy of insurance, one of the jurymen, Mr. Dunnage, after hearing one side of the case, and without hearing the other side, got up and said, *it was as legal a policy of insurance as ever was written.* The Judge, who was the same as presided on the trial of Williams, replied, *that it was a great misfortune when any gentleman of the jury makes up his mind on a cause before it was finished.* Mr. Erskine, who in that cause was counsel for the defendant (in this he was against the defendant), cried out,

it is worse than a misfortune, it is a fault. The Judge, in his address to the jury in summing up the evidence, expatiated upon, and explained the parts which the law assigned to the counsel on each side, to the witnesses, and to the Judge, and said, "*When all this was done*, and not until then, *it was the business of the jury to declare what the justice of the case was; and that it was extremely rash and imprudent in any man to draw a conclusion before all the premises were laid before them, upon which that conclusion was to be grounded.*" According then to Kenyon's own doctrine, the trial of Williams is an irregular trial, the verdict an irregular verdict, and as such is not recordable.

As to special juries, they are but modern; and were instituted for the purpose of determining cases at *law* between merchants; because, as the method of keeping merchants' accounts differs from that of common tradesmen, and their business, by lying much in foreign bills of exchange, insurance, etc., is of a different description to that of common tradesmen, it might happen that a common jury might not be competent to form a judgment. The law that instituted special juries, makes it necessary that the jurors be *merchants*, or of the degree of *squires*. A special jury in London is generally composed of merchants; and in the country, of men called country squires, that is, fox-hunters, or men qualified to hunt foxes. The one may decide very well upon a case of pounds, shillings, and pence, or of the counting-house: and the other of the jockey-club or the chase. But who would not laugh, that because such men can decide such cases, they can also be jurors upon theology. Talk with some London merchants about scripture, and they will understand you mean *scrip*, and tell you how much it is worth at the Stock Exchange. Ask them about theology, and they will say they know of no such gentleman upon Change. Tell some country squires of the sun and moon standing still, the one on the top of a hill and the other in a valley, and they will swear it is a lie of one's own making. Tell them that God Almighty ordered a man to make a cake and bake it with a t—d and eat it, and they will say it is one of Dean Swift's blackguard stories. Tell them it is in the Bible, and they will lay a bowl of punch it is not, and leave it to the parson of the parish to decide. Ask *them* also about theology, and they will say, they know of no such an one on the turf. An appeal to such juries serves to bring the Bible into more ridicule than

anything the author of the "Age of Reason" has written; and the manner in which the trial has been conducted shows that the prosecutor dares not come to the point, nor meet the defence of the defendant. But all other cases apart, on what ground of right, otherwise than on the right assumed by an inquisition, do such prosecutions stand? Religion is a private affair between every man and his Maker, and no tribunal or third party has a right to interfere between them. It is not properly a thing of this world; it is only practised in this world; but its object is in a future world: and it is no otherwise an object of just laws, than for the purpose of protecting the equal rights of all, however various their beliefs may be. If one man choose to believe the book called the Bible to be the word of God, and another, from the convinced idea of the purity and perfection of God, compared with the contradictions the book contains—from the lasciviousness of some of its stories, like that of Lot getting drunk and debauching his two daughters, which is not spoken of as a crime, and for which the most absurd apologies are made—from the immorality of some of its precepts, like that of showing no mercy—and from the total want of evidence on the case, thinks he ought not to believe it to be the word of God, each of them has an equal right; and if the one has the right to give his reasons for believing it to be so, the other has an equal right to give his reasons for believing the *contrary.* Anything that goes beyond this rule is an inquisition. Mr. Erskine talks of his moral education; Mr. Erskine is very little acquainted with theological subjects, if he does not know there is such a thing as a *sincere* and *religious* belief that the Bible is not the word of God. This is my belief; it is the belief of thousands far more learned than Mr. Erskine; and it is a belief that is every day increasing. It is not infidelity, as Mr. Erskine profanely and abusively calls it; it is the direct reverse of infidelity. It is a pure religious belief, founded on the idea of the perfection of the Creator. If the Bible be the word of God, it needs not the wretched aid of prosecutions to support it; and you might with as much propriety, make a law to protect the sunshine, as to protect the Bible, if the Bible, like the sun, be the work of God. We see that God takes good care of the Creation he has made. He suffers no part of it to be extinguished: and he will take the same care of his word, if he ever *gave one.* But men ought to be reverentially careful and suspicious how they ascribe

books to him as his *word*, which from this confused condition would dishonor a common scribbler, and against which there is abundant evidence, and every cause to suspect imposition. Leave then the Bible to itself. God will take care of it if he has anything to do with it, as he takes care of the sun and the moon, which need not your laws for their better protection. As the two instances I have produced, in the beginning of this letter, from the book of Genesis, the one respecting the account called the Mosaic account of the Creation, the other of the Flood, sufficiently show the necessity of examining the Bible, in order to ascertain what degree of evidence there is for receiving or rejecting it as a sacred book; I shall not add more upon that subject; but in order to show Mr. Erskine that there are religious establishments for public worship which make no profession of faith of the books called holy scriptures, nor admit of priests, I will conclude with an account of a society lately begun in Paris, and now very rapidly extending itself.

The society takes the name of Theophilantropes, which would be rendered in English by the word Theophilanthropists, compounded of three Greek words, signifying God, Love, and Man. The explanation given to this word is, *Lovers of God and Man*, or *Adorers of God and Friends of Man*, *adorateurs de Dieu et amis des hommes*. The society proposes to publish each year a volume, the first volume is just published, entitled

RELIGIOUS YEAR OF THE THEOPHILANTHROPISTS;

OR,

ADORERS OF GOD, AND FRIENDS OF MAN.

Being a collection of the discourses, lectures, hymns and canticles, for all the religious and moral festivals of the Theophilanthropists during the course of the year, whether in their public temples or in their private families, published by the author of the Manual of the Theophilanthropists.

The volume of this year, which is the first, contains 214 pages duodecimo.

The following is the table of contents:—

1. Precise history of the Theophilanthropists.
2. Exercises common to all the festivals.
3. Hymn, No. I. God of whom the universe speaks.

4. Discourse upon the existence of God.
5. Ode II. The heavens instruct the earth.
6. Precepts of wisdom, extracted from the book of the Adorateurs.
7. Canticle, No. III. God Creator, soul of nature.
8. Extracts from divers moralists, upon the nature of God, and upon the physical proofs of his existence.
9. Canticle, No. IV. Let us bless at our waking the God who gives us light.
10. Moral thoughts extracted from the Bible.
11. Hymn, No. V. Father of the universe.
12. Contemplation of nature on the first days of the spring.
13. Ode, No. VI. Lord in thy glory adorable.
14. Extracts from the moral thoughts of Confucius.
15. Canticle in praise of actions, and thanks for the works of the creation.
16. Continuation from the moral thoughts of Confucius.
17. Hymn, No. VII. All the universe is full of thy magnificence.
18. Extracts from an ancient sage of India upon the duties of families.
19. Upon the spring.
20. Moral thoughts of divers Chinese authors.
21. Canticle, No. VIII. Everything celebrates the glory of the eternal.
22. Continuation of the moral thoughts of Chinese authors.
23. Invocation for the country.
24. Extracts from the moral thoughts of Theognis.
25. Invocation, Creator of man.
26. Ode, No. IX. Upon death.
27. Extracts from the book of the Moral Universal, upon happiness.
28. Ode, No. X. Supreme Author of Nature.

INTRODUCTION;

ENTITLED

PRECISE HISTORY OF THE THEOPHILANTHROPISTS.

"Towards the month of Vendimiaire, of the year 5 (Sept. 1796), there appeared at Paris, a small work, entitled, Manual

of the Theoanthropophiles, since called, for the sake of easier pronunciation, Theophilanthropes (Theophilanthropists), published by C——.

"The worship set forth in this Manual, of which the origin is from the beginning of the world, was then professed by some families in the silence of domestic life. But no sooner was the Manual published, than some persons, respectable for their knowledge and their manners, saw, in the formation of a society open to the public, an easy method of spreading moral religion, and of leading by degrees great numbers to the knowledge thereof, who appear to have forgotten it. This consideration ought of itself not to leave indifferent those persons who know that morality and religion, which is the most solid support thereof, are necessary to the maintenance of society, as well as to the happiness of the individual. These considerations determined the families of the Theophilanthropists to unite publicly for the exercise of their worship.

"The first society of this kind opened in the month of Nivose, year 5 (Jan. 1797), in the street Dennis, No. 34, corner of Lombard-street. The care of conducting this society was undertaken by five fathers of families. They adopted the Manual of the Theophilanthropists. They agreed to hold their days of public worship on the days corresponding to Sundays, but without making this a hindrance to other societies to choose such other day as they thought more convenient. Soon after this, more societies were opened, of which some celebrate on the decadi (tenth day), and others on the Sunday: it was also resolved that the committee should meet one hour each week for the purpose of preparing or examining the discourses and lectures proposed for the next general assembly. That the general assemblies should be called Fetes (festivals) religious and moral. That those festivals should be conducted in principal and form, in a manner, as not to be considered as the festivals of an exclusive worship; and that in recalling those who might not be attached to any particular worship, those festivals might also be attended as moral exercises by disciples of every sect, and consequently avoid, by scrupulous care, everything that might make the society appear under the name of a sect. The society adopts neither *rights* nor *priesthood*, and it will never lose sight of the resolution not to advance anything as a society, inconvenient to any sect or sects, in any time or country, and under any government.

"It will be seen, that it is so much the more easy for the society to keep within this circle, because, that the dogmas of the Theophilanthropists are those upon which all the sects have agreed, that their moral is that upon which there has never been the least dissent; and that the name they have taken, expresses the double end of all the sects, that of leading to the *adoration of God and love of man.*

"The Theophilanthropists do not call themselves the disciples of such or such a man. They avail themselves of the wise precepts that have been transmitted by writers of all countries and in all ages. The reader will find in the discourses, lectures, hymns, and canticles, which the Theophilanthropists have adopted for their religious and moral festivals, and which they present under the title of Annee Religieuse, extracts from moralists, ancient and modern, divested of maxims too severe, or too loosely conceived, or contrary to piety, whether towards God or towards man."

Next follow the dogmas of the Theophilanthropists, or things they profess to believe. These are but two, and are thus expressed, *les Théophilanthropes croient à l'existence de Dieu, et a l'immortalité de l'âme.* The Theophilanthropists believe in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul

The Manual of the Theophilanthropists, a small volume of sixty pages, duodecimo, is published separately, as is also their catechism, which is of the same size. The principles of the Theophilanthropists are the same as those published in the first part of the "Age of Reason" in 1793, and in the second part, in 1795. The Theophilanthropists, as a society, are silent upon all the things they do not profess to believe, as the *sacredness* of the books called the Bible, &c., &c. They profess the immortality of the soul, but they are silent on the immortality of the body, or that which the church calls the resurrection. The author of the "Age of Reason" gives reasons for everything he *disbelieves*, as well as for those he *believes;* and where this cannot be done with safety, the government is a despotism, and the church an inquisition.

It is more than three years since the first part of the "Age of Reason" was published, and more than a year and a half since the publication of the second part: the bishop of Llandaff undertook to write an answer to the second part; and it was not until after it was known that the author of the "Age of Reason" would reply to the bishop, that the prosecution against the book

was set on foot, and which is said to be carried on by some clergy of the English church. If the bishop is one of them, and the object be to prevent an exposure of the numerous and gross errors he has committed in his work (and which he wrote when report said that Thomas Paine was dead), it is a confession that he feels the weakness of his cause, and finds himself unable to maintain it. In this case he has given me a triumph I did not seek, and Mr. Erskine, the herald of the prosecution, has proclaimed it.

AN ESSAY ON DREAMS.

As a great deal is said in the New Testament about dreams, it is first necessary to explain the nature of a dream, and to show by what operation of the mind a dream is produced during sleep. When this is understood we shall be better enabled to judge whether any reliance can be placed upon them . and, consequently, whether the several matters in the New Testament related of dreams deserve the credit which the writers of that book and priests and commentators ascribe to them.

In order to understand the nature of dreams, or of that which passes in ideal vision during a state of sleep, it is first necessary to understand the composition and decomposition of the human mind.

The three great faculties of the mind are IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT and MEMORY. Every action of the mind comes under one or the other of these faculties. In a state of wakefulness, as in the day-time, these three faculties are all active ; but that is seldom the case in sleep, and never perfectly : and this is the cause that our dreams are not so regular and rational as our waking thoughts.

The seat of that collection of powers or faculties that constitute what is called the mind, is in the brain There is not, and cannot be, any visible demonstration of this anatomically, but accidents happening to living persons, show it to be so. An injury done to the brain by a fracture of the skull, will sometimes change a wise man into a childish idiot : a being without a mind. But so careful has nature been of that *sanctum sanctorum* of man, the brain, that of all the external accidents to which humanity is subject, this happens the most seldom. But we often see it happening by long and habitual intemperance.

Whether those three faculties occupy distinct apartments of the brain, is known only to that Almighty power that formed and organized it. We can see the external effects of muscular motion in all the members of the body, though its *primum mobile*, or first moving cause, is unknown to man. Our external

motions are sometimes the effect of intention, and sometimes not. If we are sitting and intend to rise, or standing and intend to sit, or to walk, the limbs obey that intention as if they heard the order given. But we make a thousand motions every day, and that as well waking as sleeping, that have no prior intention to direct them. Each member acts as if it had a will or mind of its own. Man governs the whole when he pleases to govern, but in the interims the several parts, like little suburbs, govern themselves without consulting the sovereign.

But all these motions, whatever be the generating cause, are external and visible. But with respect to the brain, no ocular observation can be made upon it. All is mystery; all is darkness in that womb of thought.

Whether the brain is a mass of matter in continual rest, whether it has a vibrating pulsative motion, or a heaving and falling motion, like matter in fermentation; whether different parts of the brain have different motions according to the faculty that is employed, be it the imagination, the judgment, or the memory, man knows nothing of it. He knows not the cause of his own wit. His own brain conceals it from him.

Comparing invisible by visible things, as metaphysical can sometimes be compared to physical things, the operations of those distinct and several faculties have some resemblance to the mechanism of a watch. The main spring which puts all in motion corresponds to the imagination: the pendulum or balance, which corrects and regulates that motion, corresponds to the judgment: and the hand and dial, like the memory, records the operations.

Now in proportion as these several faculties sleep, slumber, or keep awake, during the continuance of a dream, in that proportion the dream will be reasonable or frantic, remembered or forgotten.

If there is any faculty in mental man that never sleeps it is that volatile thing the imagination: the case is different with the judgment and memory. The sedate and sober constitution of the judgment easily disposes it to rest; and as to the memory, it records in silence, and is active only when it is called upon.

That the judgment soon goes to sleep may be perceived by our sometimes beginning to dream before we are fully asleep ourselves. Some random thought runs in the mind, and we start, as it were, into recollection that we are dreaming between sleeping and waking.

If the judgment sleeps whilst the imagination keeps awake,

the dream will be a riotous assemblage of mis-shapen images and ranting ideas, and the more active the imagination is, the wilder the dream will be. The most inconsistent and the most impossible things will appear right; because that faculty, whose province it is to keep order, is in a state of absence. The master of the school is gone out, and the boys are in an uproar.

If the memory sleeps, we shall have no other knowledge of the dream than that we have dreamt, without knowing what it was about. In this case it is sensation, rather then recollection, that acts. The dream has given us some sense of pain or trouble, and we feel it as a hurt, rather than remember it is as a vision.

If memory only slumbers, we shall have a faint remembrance of the dream, and after a few minutes it will sometimes happen that the principal passages of the dream will occur to us more fully. The cause of this is that the memory will sometimes continue slumbering or sleeping after we are awake ourselves, and that so fully, that it may, and sometimes does happen that we do not immediately recollect where we are, nor what we have been about, or have to do. But when the memory starts into wakefulness, it brings the knowledge of these things back upon us, like a flood of light, and sometimes the dream with it.

But the most curious circumstances of the mind in a state of dream, is the power it has to become the agent of every person, character and thing, of which it dreams. It carries on conversation with several, asks questions, hears answers, gives and receives information, and it acts all these parts itself.

But however various and eccentric the imagination may be in the creation of images and ideas, it cannot supply the place of memory with respect to things that are forgotten when we are awake. For example, if we have forgotten the name of a person, and dream of seeing him and asking him his name, he cannot tell it; for it is ourselves asking ourselves the question.

But though the imagination cannot supply the place of real memory, it has the wild faculty of counterfeiting memory. It dreams of persons it never knew, and talks with them as if it remembered them as old acquaintances. It relates circumstances that never happened, and tells them as if they had happened. It goes to places that never existed, and knows where all the streets and houses are, as if it had been there before. The scenes it creates often appear as scenes remembered. It will sometimes act a dream within a dream, and, in the delusion of dreaming, tell a dream it never dreamed, and

tell it as if it was from memory. It may also be remarked that the imagination in a dream has no idea of time, *as time*. It counts only by circumstances; and if a succession of circumstances pass in a dream that would require a great length of time to accomplish them, it will appear to the dreamer that a length of time equal thereto has passed also.

As this is the state of the mind in dream, it may rationally be said that every person is mad once in twenty-four hours, for were he to act in the day as he dreams in the night, he would be confined for a lunatic. In a state of wakefulness, those three faculties being all alive, and acting in union, constitute the rational man. In dreams it is otherwise, and, therefore, that state which is called insanity, appears to be no other than a disunion of those faculties, and a cessation of the judgment during wakefulness, that we so often experience during sleep; and idiotcy, into which some persons have fallen, is that cessation of all the faculties of which we can be sensible when we happen to wake before our memory.

In this view of the mind how absurd it is to place reliance upon dreams, and how much more absurd to make them a foundation for religion; yet the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, begotten by the Holy Ghost, a being never heard of before, stands on the story of an old man's dream. "*And behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not thou to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*"—Matt. chap. i. verse 20.

After this we have the childish stories of three or four other dreams? about Joseph going into Egypt; about his coming back again; about this, and about that, and this story of dreams has thrown Europe into a dream for more than a thousand years. All the efforts that nature, reason, and conscience have made to awaken man from it, have been ascribed by priestcraft and superstition to the workings of the devil, and had it not been for the American revolution, which, by establishing the *universal right of conscience*, first opened the way to free discussion, and for the French revolution which followed, this religion of dreams had continued to be preached, and that after it had ceased to be believed. Those who preached it and did not believe it, still believed the delusion necessary. They were not bold enough to be honest, nor honest enough to be bold.

[Every new religion, like a new play, requires a new apparatus of dresses and machinery, to fit the new characters it creates. The story of Christ in the New Testament brings a new being upon the stage, which it calls the Holy Ghost; and the story of Abraham, the father of the Jews, in the Old Testament, gives existence to a new order of beings it calls Angels.—There was no Holy Ghost before the time of Christ, nor Angels before the time of Abraham.—We hear nothing of these winged gentlemen till more than two thousand years, according to the Bible chronology, from the time they say the heavens, the earth, and all therein were made:—After this, they hop about as thick as birds in a grove;—The first we hear of, pays his addresses to Hagar in the wilderness; then three of them visit Sarah; another wrestles a fall with Jacob; and these birds of passage having found their way to earth and back, are continually coming and going. They eat and drink, and up again to heaven. What they do with the food they carry away, the Bible does not tell us.—Perhaps they do as the birds do. * *

One would think that a system loaded with such gross and vulgar absurdities as scripture religion is, could never have obtained credit; yet we have seen what priestcraft and fanaticism could do, and credulity believe.

From angels in the Old Testament we get to prophets, to witches, to seers of visions, and dreamers of dreams, and sometimes we are told, as in 1 Samuel, chap. ix. ver 15, that God whispers in the ear—At other times we are not told how the impulse was given, or whether sleeping or waking.—In 2 Sam. chap. xxiv. ver. 1, it is said, "*And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.*"—And in 1 Chron. chap. xxi. ver. 1, when the same story is again related, it is said, "*And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*"

Whether this was done sleeping or waking, we are not told, but it seems that David, whom they call "a man after God's own heart," did not know by what spirit he was moved, and as to the men called inspired penmen, they agree so well about the matter, that in one book they say that it was God, and in the other that it was the Devil.

The idea that writers of the Old Testament had of God was boisterous, contemptible, and vulgar.—They make him the Mars

of the Jews, the fighting God of Israel, the conjuring God of their Priests and Prophets.—They tell as many fables of him as the Greeks told of Hercules. * * * * * * * * *

They make their God to say exultingly, "*I will get me honor upon Pharaoh and upon his Host, upon his Chariots and upon his Horsemen.*"—And that he may keep his word, they make him set a trap in the Red Sea, in the dead of the night, for Pharaoh, his host, and his horses, and drown them as a rat-catcher would do so many rats—Great honor indeed! the story of Jack the giant-killer is better told!

They pit him against the Egyptian magicians to conjure with him, the three first essays are a dead match—Each party turns his rod into a serpent, the rivers into blood and creates frogs; but upon the fourth the God of the Israelites obtains the laurel, he covers them all over with lice!—The Egyptian magicians cannot do the same, and this lousy triumph proclaims the victory!

They make their God to rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and belch fire and smoke upon mount Sinai, as if he was the Pluto of the lower regions. They make him salt up Lot's wife like pickled pork; they make him pass like Shakespeare's Queen Mab into the brain of their priests, prophets, and prophetesses, and tickle them into dreams, and after making him play all kind of tricks they confound him with Satan, and leave us at a loss to know what God they meant!

This is the descriptive God of the Old Testament; and as to the New, though the authors of it have varied the scene, they have continued the vulgarity.

Is man ever to be the dupe of priestcraft, the slave of superstition? Is he never to have just ideas of his Creator? It is better not to believe there is a God, than to believe of him falsely. When we behold the mighty universe that surrounds us, and dart our contemplation into the eternity of space, filled with innumerable orbs, revolving in eternal harmony, how paltry must the tales of the Old and New Testaments, profanely called the word of God, appear to thoughtful man? The stupendous wisdom and unerring order, that reign and govern throughout this wondrous whole, and call us to reflection, *put to shame the Bible!*—The God of eternity and of all that is real, is not the God of passing dreams, and shadows of man's imagination! The God of truth is not the God of fable; the belief

of a God begotten and a God crucified, is a God blasphemed —it is making a profane use of reason.]*

I shall conclude this Essay on Dreams with the two first verses of the 34th chapter of Ecclesiasticus, one of the books of the Apocrypha.

"*The hopes of a man void of understanding are vian and false; and dreams lift up fools—Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.*"

---

*Mr. Paine must have been in an ill humor when he wrote the passage inclosed in crotchets, commencing at page 270; and probably on reviewing it, and discovering exceptionable clauses, was induced to reject the whole, as it does not appear in the edition published by himself. But having ob-obtained the original in the hand writing of Mr. P. and deeming some of the remarks worthy of being preserved, I have thought proper to restore the passage with the exception of the objectionable parts.—EDITOR.

A LETTER:

BEING AN ANSWER TO A FRIEND ON THE PUBLICATION OF

THE AGE OF REASON.

PARIS, *May 12, 1797.*

In your letter of the 20th of March, you gave me several quotations from the Bible, which you call the *word of God*, to show me that my opinions on religion are wrong, and I could give you as many, from the same book, to show that yours are not right; consequently, then, the Bible decides nothing, because it decides any way, and every way, one chooses to make it.

But by what authority do you call the Bible the *word of God?* for this is the first point to be settled. It is not your calling it so that makes it so, any more than the Mahometans calling the Koran the *word of God* makes the Koran to be so. The Popish Councils of Nice and Laodicea, about 350 years after the time that the person called Jesus Christ is said to have lived, voted the books, that now compose what is called the New Testament, to be the *word of God.* This was done by *yeas* and *nays*, as we now vote a law. The Pharisees of the second Temple, after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, did the same by the books that now compose the Old Testament, and this is all the authority there is, which to me is no authority at all. I am as capable of judging for myself as they were, and I think more so, because, as they made a living by their religion, they had a self-interest in the vote they gave.

You may have an opinion that a man is inspired, but you cannot prove it, nor can you have any proof of it yourself, because you cannot see into his mind in order to know how he comes by his thoughts, and the same is the case with the word *revelation.*—There can be no evidence of such a thing, for you can no more prove revelation than you can prove what another man dreams of, neither can he prove it himself.

It is often said in the Bible that God spake unto Moses, but how do you know that God spake unto Moses? Because,

you will say, the Bible says so. The Koran says, that God spake unto Mahomet; do you believe that too? No. Why not? Because, you will say, you do not believe it; and so because you *do*, and because you *don't*, is all the reason you can give for believing or disbelieving, except you will say that Mahomet was an impostor. And how do you know Moses was not an impostor? For my own part, I believe that all are impostors who pretend to hold verbal communication with the Deity. It is the way by which the world has been imposed upon; but if you think otherwise you have the same right to your opinion that I have to mine, and must answer for it in the same manner. But all this does not settle the point, whether the Bible be the *word of God*, or not. It is, therefore, necessary to go a step further. The case then is:

You form your opinion of God from the account given of him in the Bible; and I form my opinion of the Bible from the wisdom and goodness of God, manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of the Creation. The result in these two cases will be, that you, by taking the Bible for your standard, will have a bad opinion of God; and I, by taking God for my standard, shall have a bad opinion of the Bible.

The Bible represents God to be a changeable, passionate vindictive being; making a world, and then drowning it, afterwards repenting of what he had done, and promising not to do so again. Setting one nation to cut the throats of another, and stopping the course of the sun till the butchery should be done. But the works of God in the Creation preach to us another doctrine. In that vast volume we see nothing to give us the idea of a changeable, passionate, vindictive God; every thing we there behold impresses us with a contrary idea; that of unchangeableness and of eternal order, harmony, and goodness. The sun and the seasons return at their appointed time, and every thing in the Creation proclaims that God is unchangeable. Now, which am I to believe: a book that any impostor may make, and call the *word of God*, or the Creation itself, which none but an Almighty Power could make? for the Bible says one thing, and the Creation says the contrary. The Bible represents God with all the passions of a mortal, and the Creation proclaims him with all the attributes of a God.

It is from the Bible that man has learned cruelty, rapine, and murder; for the belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man. That blood-thirsty man, called the prophet Samuel, makes God

to say (1 Sam. chap. xv. ver. 3), "Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and *spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.*"

That Samuel, or some other impostor, might say this, is what, at this distance of time, can neither be proved nor disproved, but, in my opinion, it is blasphemy to say, or to believe that God said it. All our ideas of justice and goodness of God revolt at the impious cruelty of the Bible. It is not a God, just and good, but a devil, under the name of God, that the Bible describes.

What makes this pretended order to destroy the Amalekites appear the worse, is the reason given for it. The Amalekites, four hundred years before, according to the account in Exodus, chap. 17, (but which has the appearance of fable from the magical account it gives of Moses holding up his hands,) had opposed the Israelites coming into their country, and this the Amalekites had a right to do, because the Israelites were the invaders, as the Spaniards were the invaders of Mexico; and this opposition by the Amalekites, *at that time*, is given as a reason that the men, women, infants and sucklings, sheep and oxen, camels and asses, that were born four hundred years afterwards, should be put to death; and to complete the horror, Samuel hewed Agag, the chief of the Amalekites, in pieces, as you would hew a stick of wood. I will bestow a few observations on this case.

In the first place, nobody knows who the author, or writer, of the book of Samuel was, and, therefore, the fact itself has no other proof than anonymous or hearsay evidence, which is no evidence at all. In the second place, this anonymous book says, that this slaughter was done by *the express command of God:* but all our ideas of the justice and goodness of God give the lie to the book, and as I never will believe any book that ascribes cruelty and injustice to God, I, therefore, reject the Bible as unworthy of credit.

As I have now given you my reasons for believing that the Bible is *not* the word of God, and that it is a falsehood, I have a right to ask you your reasons for believing the contrary; but I know you can give me none, except that *you were educated to believe the Bible*, and as the Turks give the same reason for believing the Koran, it is evident that education makes all the difference, and that reason and truth have nothing to do in the

case. You believe in the Bible from the accident of birth, and the Turks believe in the Koran from the same accident, and each calls the other *infidel*.—But leaving the prejudice of education out of the case, the unprejudiced truth is, that all are infidels who believe falsely of God, whether they draw their creed from the Bible, or from the Koran, from the Old Testament or from the New.

When you have examined the Bible with the attention that I have done (for I do not think you know much about it), and permit yourself to have just ideas of God, you will most probably believe as I do. But I wish you to know that this answer to your letter is not written for the purpose of changing your opinion. It is written to satisfy you, and some other friends whom I esteem, that my disbelief of the Bible is founded on a pure and religious belief in God; for, in my opinion, the Bible is a gross libel against the justice and goodness of God, in almost every part of it.

THOMAS PAINE.

CONTRADICTORY DOCTRINES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT,

BETWEEN

MATTHEW AND MARK.

In the New Testament, Mark, chap. xvi. ver. 16, it is said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." This is making salvation, or, in other words, the happiness of man after this life, to depend entirely on believing, or on what Christians call faith.

But the 25th chapter of *The gospel according to Matthew* makes Jesus Christ to preach a direct contrary doctrine to *The Gospel according to Mark;* for it makes salvation, or the future happiness of man, to depend entirely on *good works;* and those good works are not works done to God, for he needs them not, but good works done to man.

The passage referred to in Matthew is the account there given of what is called the last day, or the day of judgment, where the whole world is represented to be divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, metaphorically called the *sheep* and the *goats.*

To the one part called the righteous, or the sheep, it says, "Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world—for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat—I was thirsty and ye gave me drink—I was a stranger and ye took me in—Naked and ye clothed me—I was sick and ye visited me—I was in prison and ye came unto me."

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick and in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the king shall answer and say unto them, *Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*"

Here is nothing about believing in Christ—nothing about that phantom of the imagination called *Faith.* The works here spoken of, are works of humanity and benevolence, or, in other words, an endeavor to make God's creation happy Here is nothing about preaching and making long prayers, as if God must be dictated to by man; nor about building churches and meeting-houses, nor hiring priests to pray and preach in them. Here is nothing about predestination, that lust which some men have for damning one another. Here is nothing about baptism, whether by sprinkling or plunging, nor about any of those ceremonies for which the Christian church has been fighting, persecuting, and burning each other, ever since the Christian church began.

If it be asked, why do not priests preach the doctrine contained in this chapter? The answer is easy;—they are not fond of practising it themselves. It does not answer for their trade They had rather get than give. Charity with them begins and ends at home.

Had it been said, *Come ye blessed, ye have been liberal in paying the preachers of the word ye have contributed largely towards building churches and meeting-houses,* there is not a hired priest in Christendom but would have thundered it continually in the ears of his congregation, But as it is altogether on good works done to men, the priests pass over it in silence, and they will abuse me for bringing it into notice.

THOMAS PAINE.

MY PRIVATE THOUGHTS

ON A FUTURE STATE.

I HAVE said, in the first part of the "Age of Reason," that "*I hope for happiness after this life.*" This hope is comfortable to me, and I presume not to go beyond the comfortable idea of hope, with respect to a future state.

I consider myself in the hands of my Creator, and that he will dispose of me after this life consistently with his justice and goodness. I leave all these matters to him, as my Creator and friend, and I hold it to be presumption in man to make an article of faith as to what the Creator will do with us hereafter.

I do not believe because a man and a woman make a child, that it imposes on the Creator the unavoidable obligation of keeping the being so made in eternal existence hereafter. It is in his power to do so, or not to do so, and it is not in our power to decide which he will do.

The book called the New Testament, which I hold to be fabulous and have shown to be false, gives an account in the 25th chapter of Matthew, of what is there called the last day, or the day of judgment. The whole world, according to that account, is divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, figuratively called the sheep and the goats. They are then to receive their sentence. To the one, figuratively called the sheep, it says, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To the other, figuratively called the goats, it says, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Now the case is, the world cannot be thus divided—the moral world, like the physical world, is composed of numerous degrees of character, running imperceptibly the one into the other, in such a manner that no fixed point of division can be found in either. That point is nowhere, or is everywhere.

The whole world might be divided into two parts numerically, but not as to moral character; and, therefore, the metaphor of dividing them, as sheep and goats can be divided, whose difference is marked by their external figure, is absurd. All sheep are still sheep; all goats are still goats; it is their physical nature to be so. But one part of the world are not all good alike, nor the other part all wicked alike. There are some exceedingly good; others exceedingly wicked. There is another description of men who cannot be ranked with either the one or the other—they belong neither to the sheep nor the goats.

My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortals happy, for this is the only way in which we can serve God, *will be happy hereafter:* and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. This is my opinion. It is consistent with my idea of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me.

THOMAS PAINE.

LETTER TO CAMILLE JORDAN,

ONE OF THE COUNCIL OF FIVE HUNDRED,

OCCASIONED BY HIS REPORT ON THE PRIESTS, PUBLIC WORSHIP, AND THE BELLS.

CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVE,

As everything in your report, relating to what you call worship, connects itself with the books called the Scriptures, I begin with a quotation therefrom. It may serve to give us some idea of the fanciful origin and fabrication of those books. 2 Chronicles, chap. xxxiv. ver. 14, etc. "Hilkiah, the priest, *found* the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah, the priest, said to Shaphan, the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord, and Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan, the scribe, told the king (Josiah), saying, Hilkiah, the priest hath given me a book."

This pretended finding was about a thousand years after the time that Moses is said to have lived. Before this pretended finding, there was no such thing practised or known in the world as that which is called the law of Moses. This being the case, there is every apparent evidence that the books called the books of Moses (and which make the first part of what are called the Scriptures) and forgeries contrived between a priest and a limb,* Hilkiah, and Shaphan, the scribe, a thousand years after Moses is said to have been dead.

Thus much for the first part of the Bible. Every other part is marked with circumstances equally suspicious. We ought, therefore, to be reverentially careful how we ascribe books *as his word*, of which there is no evidence, and against which there is abundant evidence to the contrary, and every cause to suspect imposition.

In your report you speak continually of something by the

* It happens that Camille Jordan is a limb of the law.

name of worship, and you confine yourself to speak of one kind only, as if there were but one, and that one was unquestionably true.

The modes of worship are as various as the sects are numerous; and amidst all this variety and multiplicity there is but one article of belief in which every religion in the world agrees. That article has universal sanction. It is the belief of a God, or what the Greeks described by the word *Theism*, and the Latins by that of Deism. Upon this one article have been erected all the different super-structures of creeds and ceremonies continually warring with each other that now exist or ever existed. Bnt the men most and best informed upon the subject of theology, rest themselves upon this universal article, and hold all the various super-structures erected thereon, to be at least doubtful, if not altogether artificial.

The intellectual part of religion is a private affair between every man and his Maker, and in which no third party has any right to interfere. The practical part consists in our doing good to each other. But since religion has been made into a trade, the practical part has been made to consist of ceremonies performed by men called priests; and the people have been amused with ceremonial shows, processions, and bells.* By devices of this kind true religion has been banished and such means have been found out to extract money even from the pockets of the poor, instead of contributing to their relief.

* The precise date of the invention of bells cannot be traced. The ancients, it appears from Martial, Juvenal, Suctonius and others, had an article named tintinnabula, (usually translated bell), by which the Romans were summoned to their baths and public places. It seems most probable, that the description of bells now used in churches, were invented about the year 400, and generally adopted before the commencement of the seventh century. Previous to their invention, however, sounding brass, and sometimes basins, were used; and to the present day the Greek church have boards, or iron plates, full of holes, which they strike with a hammer, or mallet, to summon the priests and others to divine service. We may also remark, that in our own country, it was the custom in monasteries to visit every person's cell early in the morning, and knock on the door with a similar instrument, called the wakening mallet—doubtless no very pleasing intrusion on the slumbers of the Monks.

But, the use of bells having been established, it was found that devils were terrified at the sound, and slunk in haste away; in consequence of which it was thought necessary to baptize them in a solemn manner, which appears to have been first done by Pope John XII. A.D. 968. A record of this practice still exists in the Tom of Lincoln, and the great Tom at Oxford, &c.

Having thus laid the foundation of superstitious veneration in the hearts of the common people, it cannot be a matter of surprise that they were soon

No man ought to make a living by religion. It is dishonest so to do. Religion is not an act that can be performed by proxy. One person cannot act religion for another. Every person must perform it for himself: and all that a priest can do is to take from him, he wants nothing but his money, and then to riot in the spoil and laugh at his credulity.

The only people, as a professional sect of Christians, who provide for the poor of their society, are people known by the name of Quakers. Those men have no priests. They assemble quietly in their places of meeting, and do not disturb their neighbours with shows and noise of bells. Religion does not unite itself to show and noise. True religion is without either. Where there is both there is no true religion.

The first object for inquiry in all cases, more especially in matters of religious concern, is TRUTH. We ought to inquire into the truth of whatever we are taught to believe, and it is certain that the books called the Scriptures stand, in this respect, in more than a doubtful predicament. They have been held in existence, and in a sort of credit among the common class of people, by art, terror, and persecution. They have little or no credit among the enlightened part, but they have been made the means of encumbering the world with a numerous

---

used at rejoicings, and high festivals in the church (for the purpose of driving away any evil spirit which might be in the neighborhood) as well as on the arrival of any great personage, on which occasion the usual fee was one penny.

One other custom remains to be explained, viz., tolling bell on the occasion of any person's death, a custom which, in the manner now practised, is totally different from its original institution. It appears to have been used as early as the 7th century, when bells were first generally used, and to have been denominated the soul bell (as it signified the departing of the soul), as also, the passing bell. Thus Wheatly tells us, "Our church, in imitation of the Saints of former ages, calls in the Minister and others who are at hand, to assist their brother in his last extremity; in order to this, she directs a bell should be tolled when any one is *passing* out of this life." Durand also says—"When any one is *dying*, bells must be tolled, that the people may put up their prayers for him; let this be done twice for a woman, and thrice for a man. If for a clergyman, as many times as he had orders; and, at the conclusion, a peal on all the bells, to distinguish the quality of the person for whom the people are to put up their prayers."—From these passages, it appears evident that the bell was to be tolled *before* a person's decease rather than *after*, as at the present day; and that the object was to obtain the prayers of all who heard it, for the repose of the soul of their departing neighbor. At first, when the tolling took place after the person's decease, it was deemed superstitious, and was partially disused, which was found materially to affect the revenue of the church. The priesthood having removed the objection, bells were again tolled, upon payment of the customary fees.—*English Paper.*

priesthood, who have fattened on the labour of the people, and consumed the sustenance that ought to be applied to the widows and the poor.

It is a want of feeling to talk of priests and bells whilst so many infants are perishing in the hopitals, and aged and infirm poor in the streets, from want of necessaries. The abundance that France produces is sufficient for every want, if rightly applied; but priests and bells, like articles of luxury, ought to be the least articles of consideration.

We talk of religion. Let us talk of truth; for that which is not the truth, is not worthy the name of religion.

We see different parts of the world overspread with different books, each of which, though contradictory to the other, is said by its partisans, to be of divine origin, and is made a rule of faith and practice. In countries under despotic governments, where inquiry is always forbidden, the people are condemned to believe as they have been taught by their priests. This was for many centuries the case in France: but this link in the chain of slavery, is happily broken by the revolution; and, that it may never be rivetted again, let us employ a part of the liberty we enjoy in scrutinizing into the truth. Let us leave behind us some monument, that we have made the cause and honor of our Creator an object of our care. If we have been imposed upon by the terrors of government and the artifice of priests in matters of religion, let us do justice to our Creator by examining into the case. His name is too sacred to be affixed to anything which is fabulous; and it is our duty to inquire whether we believe, or encourage the people to believe, in fables or in facts.

It would be a project worthy the situation we are in, to invite inquiry of this kind. We have committees for various objects; and, among others, a committee for bells. We have institutions, academies, and societies for various purposes; but we have none for inquiring into historical truth in matters of religious concern.

They show us certain books which they call the Holy Scriptures, the word of God, and other names of that kind; but we ought to know what evidence there is for our believing them to be so, and at what time they originated and in what manner. We know that men could make books, and we know that artifice and superstition could give them a name; could call them sacred. But we ought to be careful that the name of our Crea-

tor be not abused. Let then all the evidence with respect to those books be made a subject of inquiry. If there be evidence to warrant our belief of them, let us encourage the propagation of it: but if not, let us be careful not to promote the cause of delusion and falsehood.

I have already spoken of the Quakers—that they have no priests, no bells—and that they are remarkable for their care of the poor of their society. They are equally as remarkable for the education of their children. I am a descendant of a family of that profession; my father was a Quaker; and I presume I may be admitted an evidence of what I assert. The seeds of good principles, and the literary means of advancement in the world, are laid in early life. Instead, therefore, of consuming the substance of the nation upon priests, whose life at best is a life of idleness, let us think of providing for the education of those who have not the means of doing it themselves. One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests.

If we look back at what was the condition of France under the *ancient regime*, we cannot acquit the priests of corrupting the morals of the nation. Their pretended celibacy led them to carry debauchery and domestic infidelity into every family where they could gain admission; and their blasphemous pretensions to forgive sins, encouraged the commission of them. Why has the Revolution of France been stained with crimes which the Revolution of the United States of America was not? Men are physically the same in all countries; it is education that makes them different. Accustom a people to believe that priests, or any other class of men, can forgive sins, and you will have sins in abundance.

I come now to speak more particularly to the object of your report.

You claim a privilege incompatible with the constitution and with rights. The constitution protects equally, as it ought to do, every profession of religion; it gives no exclusive privilege to any. The churches are the common property of all the people; they are national goods, and cannot be given exclusively to any one profession, because the right does not exist of giving to any one that which appertains to all. It would be consistent with right that the churches be sold, and the money arising therefrom be invested as a fund for the education of children of poor parents of every profession, and, if more than

sufficient for this purpose, that the surplus be appropriated to the support of the aged poor. After this, every profession can erect its own place of worship, if it choose—support its own priests, if it choose to have any—or perform its worship without priests, as the Quakers do.

As to the bells, they are a public nuisance. If one profession is to have bells, another has the right to use the instruments of the same kind, or any other noisy instrument. Some may choose to meet at the sound of cannon, another at the beat of drum, another at the sound of trumpets, and so on, until the whole becomes a scene of general confusion. But if we permit ourselves to think of the sick, and the many sleepless nights and days they undergo, we shall feel the impropriety of increasing their distress by the noise of bells, or any other noisy instruments.

Quiet and private domestic devotion neither offends nor incommodes anybody; and the constitution has wisely guarded against the use of externals. Bells come under this description, and public processions still more so—Streets and highways are for the accommodation of persons following their several occupations, and no sectary has a right to incommode them—If any one has, every other has the same; and the meeting of various and contradictory processions would be tumultuous. Those who formed the constitution had wisely reflected upon these cases; and, whilst they were careful to reserve the equal right of every one, they restrained every one from giving offence, or incommoding another.

Men, who through a long and tumultuous scene, have lived in retirement as you have done, may think, when they arrive at power, that nothing is more easy than to put the world to rights in an instant; they form to themselves gay ideas at the success of their projects; but they forget to contemplate the difficulties that attend them, and the dangers with which they are pregnant. Alas! nothing is so easy as to deceive one's self. Did all men think, as you think, or as you say, your plan would need no advocate, because it would have no opposer; but there are millions who think differently to you, and who are determined to be neither the dupes nor the slaves of error or design.

It is your good fortune to arrive at power, when the sunshine of prosperity is breathing forth after a long and stormy night. The firmness of your colleagues, and of those you have

succeeded—the unabated energy of the Directory, and the unequalled bravery of the armies of the Republic, have made the way smooth and easy to you. If you look back at the difficulties that existed when the constitution commenced, you cannot but be confounded with admiration at the difference between that time and now. At that moment the Directory were placed like the forlorn hope of an army, but you were in safe retirement. They occupied the post of honourable danger, and they have merited well of their country.

You talk of justice and benevolence, but you begin at the wrong end. The defenders of your country, and the deplorable state of the poor, are objects of prior consideration to priests and bells and gaudy processions.

You talk of peace, but your manner of talking of it embarrasses the Directory in making it, and serves to prevent it. Had you been an actor in all the scenes of government from its commencement, you would have been too well informed to have brought forward projects that operate to encourage the enemy. When you arrived at a share in the government, you found every thing tending to a prosperous issue. A series of victories unequalled in the world, and in the obtaining of which you had no share, preceded your arrival. Every enemy but one was subdued; and that one, (the Hanoverian government of England) deprived of every hope, and a bankrupt in all its resources, was sueing for peace. In such a state of things, no new question that might tend to agitate and anarchize the interior, ought to have had place; and the project you propose tends directly to that end.

Whilst France was a monarchy, and under the government of those things called kings and priests, England could always defeat her; but since France has RISEN TO BE A REPUBLIC, the GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND crouches beneath her, so great is the difference between a government of kings and priests, and that which is founded on the system of representation. But, could the government of England find a way, under the sanction of your report, to inundate France with a flood of emigrant priests, she would find also the way to domineer as before; she would retrieve her shattered finances at your expense, and the ringing of bells would be the tocsin of your downfall.

Did peace consist in nothing but the cessation of war, it would not be difficult; but the terms are yet to be arranged;

and those terms will be better or worse, in proportion as France and her councils be united or divided. That the government of England counts much upon your report, and upon others of a similar tendency, is what the writer of this letter, who knows that government well, has no doubt. You are but new on the theatre of government, and you ought to suspect yourself of misjudging; the experience of those who have gone before you should be of some service to you.

But if, in consequence of such measures as you propose, you put it out of the power of the Directory to make a good peace, and to accept of terms you would afterwards reprobate, it is yourselves that must bear the censure.

You conclude your report by the following address to your colleagues:—

"Let us hasten, representatives of the people! to affix to these tutelary laws the seal of our unanimous approbation. All our fellow-citizens will learn to cherish political liberty from the enjoyment of religious liberty: you will have broken the most powerful arm of your enemies; you will have surrounded this assembly with the most impregnant rampart—confidence, and the people's love. O! my colleagues! how desirable is that popularity which is the offspring of good laws! What a consolation it will be to us hereafter, when returned to our own fire-sides, to hear from the mouths of our fellow-citizens, these simple expressions—*Blessings reward you men of peace! you have restored to us our temples—our ministers—the liberty of adoring the God of our fathers: you have recalled harmony to our families—morality to our hearts: you have made us adore the legislature and respect all its laws!*"

Is it possible, citizen representative, that you can be serious in this address? Were the lives of the priests under the *ancient regime* such as to justify anything you say of them? Were not all France convinced of their immorality? Were they not considered as the patrons of debauchery and domestic infidelity, and not as the patrons of morals? What was their pretended celibacy but perpetual adultery? What was their blasphemous pretentions to forgive sins, but an encouragement to the commission of them, and a love for their own? Do you want to lead again into France all the vices of which they have been the patrons, and to overspread the republic with English pensioners? It is cheaper to corrupt than to conquer; and the English government, unable to conquer, will stoop to corrupt.

Arrogance and meanness, though in appearance opposite, are vices of the same heart.

Instead of concluding in the manner you have done, you ought rather to have said :—

"O ! my colleagues ! we are arrived at a glorious period—a period that promises more than we could have expected, and all that we could have wished. Let us hasten to take into consideration the honours and rewards due to our brave defenders. Let us hasten to give encouragement to agriculture and manufactures, that commerce may reinstate itself, and our people have employment. Let us review the condition of the suffering poor, and wipe from our country the reproach of forgetting them. Let us devise means to establish schools of instruction, that we may banish the ignorance that the ancient regime of kings and priests had spread among the people.—Let us propagate morality, unfettered by superstition—Let us cultivate justice and benevolence, that the God of our fathers may bless us. The helpless infant and the aged poor cry to us to remember them—Let not wretchedness be seen in our streets—Let France exhibit to the world the glorious example of expelling ignorance and misery together.

"Let these, my virtuous colleagues, be the subject of our care, that, when we return among our fellow-citizens, they may say, *Worthy representatives ! you have done well. You have done justice and honor to our brave defenders. You have encouraged agriculture—cherished our decayed manufactures—given new life to commerce, and employment to our people. You have removed from our country the reproach of forgetting the poor—You have caused the cry of the orphan to cease—You have wiped the tear from the eye of the suffering mother—You have given comfort to the aged and infirm—You have penetrated into the gloomy recesses of wretchedness, and have banished it. Welcome among us, ye brave and virtuous representatives ! and may your example be followed by your successors !*"

THOMAS PAINE.

PARIS, *1797*.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED TO THE SOCIETY OF THEOPHILANTHROPISTS AT PARIS.

RELIGION has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality, the other by natural philosophy.

The existence of a God is the first dogma of the Theophilanthropists. It is upon this subject that I solicit your attention; for though it has been often treated of, and that most sublimely, the subject is inexhaustible; and there will always remain something to be said that has not been before advanced. I go, therefore, to open the subject, and to crave your attention to the end.

The universe is the Bible of a true Theophilanthropist. It is there that he reads of God. It is there that the proofs of his existence are to be sought and to be found. As to written or printed books, by whatever name they are called they are the works of man's hands, and carry no evidence in themselves that God is the author of any of them. It must be in something that man could not make, that we must seek evidence for our belief, and that something is the universe; the true Bible; the inimitable work of God.

Contemplating the universe, the whole system of creation, in this point of light, we shall discover that all that which is called natural philosophy is properly a divine study. It is the study of God through his works. It is the best study by which we can arrive at a knowledge of his existence, and the only one by which we can gain a glimpse of his perfection.

Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible WHOLE is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the un-

thankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not written nor printed books; but the scripture called the *Creation.*

It has been the error of the schools to teach astronomy, and all the other sciences, and subjects of natural philosophy, as accomplishments only; whereas they should be taught theologically, or with reference to the Being who is the author of them: for all the principles of science are of divine origin. Man cannot make, or invent, or contrive principles. He can only discover them; and he ought to look through the discovery to the Author.

When we examine an extraordinary piece of machinery, an astonishing pile of architecture, a well executed statue, or an highly finished painting, where life and action are imitated, and habit only prevents our mistaking a surface of light and shade for cubical solidity, our ideas are naturally led to think of the extensive genius and talents of the artists. When we study the elements of geometry, we think of Euclid. When he speak of gravitation, we think of Newton. How then is it, that when we study the works of God in the Creation, we stop short, and do not think of God? It is from the error of the schools in having taught those subjects as accomplishments only, and thereby separated the study of them from the being who is the author of them.

The schools have made the study of theology to consist in the study of opinions in written or printed books; whereas theology should be studied in the works or books of the Creation. The study of theology in books of opinions has often produced fanaticism, rancor, and cruelty of temper; and from hence have proceeded the numerous persecutions, the fanatical quarrels, the religious burnings and massacres, that have desolated Europe. But the study of theology in the works of the Creation produces a direct contrary effect. The mind becames at once enlightened and serene; a copy of the scene it beholds: information and adoration go hand in hand; and all the social faculties become enlarged.

The evil that has resulted from the error of the schools, in teaching natural philosophy as an accomplishment only, has been that of generating in the pupils a species of atheism. Instead of looking through the works of the Creation, to the Creator himself, they stop short, and employ the knowledge they acquire to create doubts of his existence. They labor with

studied ingenuity to ascribe everything they behold to innate properties of matter; and jump over all the rest, by saying, that matter is eternal.

Let us examine this subject; it is worth examining; for if we examine it through all its cases, the result will be, that the existence of a superior cause, or that which man calls God, will be discoverable by philosophical principles.

In the first place, admitting matter to have properties, as we see it has, the question stil remains, how came matter by those properties? To this they will answer, that matter possessed those properties eternally. This is not solution, but assertion: and to deny it is equally impossible of proof as to assert it. It is then necessary to go further; and, therefore, I say, if there exist a circumstance that is *not* a property of matter, and without which the universe, or, to speak in a limited degree, the solar system, composed of planets and a sun, could not exist a moment; all the arguments of atheism, drawn from properties of matter and applied to account for the universe, will be overthrown, and the existence of a superior cause, or that which man calls God, becomes discoverable, as is before said, by natural philosophy.

I go now to show that such a circumstance exists, and what it is:

The universe is composed of matter, and, as a system, is sustained by motion. Motion is *not a property* of matter, and without this motion, the solar system could not exist. Were motion a property of matter, that undiscovered and undiscoverable thing called perpetual motion would establish itself. It is because motion is not a property of matter that perpetual motion is an impossibility in the hand of every being but that of the Creator of motion. When the pretenders to atheism can produce perpetual motion, and not till then, they may expect to be credited.

The natural state of matter, as to place, is a state of rest. Motion, or change of place, is the effect of an external cause acting upon matter. As to that faculty of matter that is called gravitation, it is the influence which two or more bodies have reciprocally on each other to unite and to be at rest. Everything which has hitherto been discovered, with respect to the motion of the planets in the system, relates only to the laws by which motion acts, and not to the cause of motion. Gravitation, so far from being the cause of motion to the planets that

compose the solar system, would be the destruction of the solar system, were revolutionary motion to cease; for as the action of spinning upholds a top, the revolutionary motion upholds the planets in their orbits, and prevents them from gravitating and forming one mass with the sun. In one sense of the word, philosophy knows, and atheism says, that matter is in perpetual motion. But motion here refers to the *state* of matter, and that only on the surface of the earth. It is either decomposition, which is continually destroying the form of bodies of matter, or re-composition, which renews that matter in the same or another form, as the decomposition of animal or vegetable substances enter into the composition of other bodies. But the motion that upholds the solar system is of an entire different kind, and is not a property of matter. It operates also to an entire different effect. It operates to *perpetual preservation*, and to prevent *any change* in the state of the system.

Giving then to matter all the properties which philosophy knows it has, or all that atheism ascribes to it, and can prove, and even supposing matter to be eternal, it will not account for the system of the universe, or of the solar system, because it will not account for motion, and it is motion that preserves it. When, therefore, we discover a circumstance of such immense importance, that without it the universe could not exist, and for which neither matter, nor any, nor all the properties of matter can account; we are by necessity forced into the rational and comfortable belief of the existence of a cause superior to matter, and that cause man calls God.

As to that which is called nature, it is no other than the laws by which motion and action of every kind, with respect to unintelligible matter is regulated. And when we speak of looking through nature up to nature's God, we speak philosophically the same rational language as when we speak of looking through human laws up to the power that ordained them.

God is the power or first cause, nature is the law, and matter is the subject acted upon.

But infidelity, by ascribing every phenomenon to properties of matter, conceives a system for which it cannot account, and yet it pretends to demonstration. It reasons from what it sees on the surface of the earth, but it does not carry itself to the solar system existing by motion. It sees upon the surface a perpetual decomposition and recomposition of matter. It sees

that an oak produces an acorn, an acorn an oak, a bird an egg, an egg a bird, and so on. In things of this kind it sees something which it calls natural cause, but none of the causes it sees is the cause of that motion which preserves the solar system.

Let us contemplate this wonderful and stupendous system consisting of matter and existing by motion. It is not matter in a state of rest, nor in a state of decomposition or re-composition. It is matter systematized in perpetual orbicular or circular motion. As a system that motion is the life of it, as animation is life to an animal body; deprive the system of motion, and, as a system, it must expire. Who then breathed into the system the life of motion? What power impelled the planets to move, since motion is not a property of the matter of which they are composed? If we contemplate the immense velocity of this motion, our wonder becomes increased, and our adoration enlarges itself in the same proportion. To instance only one of the planets, that of the earth we inhabit, its distance from the sun, the centre of the orbits of all the planets, is, according to observations of the transit of the planet Venus, about one hundred million miles; consequently, the diameter of the orbit, or circle in which the earth moves round the sun, is double that distance; and the measure of the circumference of the orbit, taken as three times its diameter, is six hundred million miles. The earth performs this voyage in 365 days and some hours, and consequently moves at the rate of more than one million six hundred thousand miles every twenty-four hours.

Where will infidelity, where will atheism find cause for this astonishing velocity of motion, never ceasing, never varying, and which is the preservation of the earth in its orbit? It is not by reasoning from an acorn to an oak, or from any change in the state of matter on the surface of the earth, that this can be accounted for. Its cause is not to be found in matter, nor in anything we call nature. The atheist who affects to reason, and the fanatic who rejects reason, plunge themselves alike into inextricable difficulties. The one perverts the sublime and enlightening study of natural philosophy into a deformity of absurdities by not reasoning to the end. The other loses himself in the obscurity of metaphysical theories, and dishonors the Creator, by treating the study of his works with contempt. The one is a half-rational of whom there is some hope, the other a visionary to whom we must be charitable.

When at first thought we think of the Creator, our ideas appear to us undefined and confused; but if we reason philosophically, those ideas can be easily arranged and simplified. *It is a Being whose power is equal to his will.* Observe the nature of the will of man. It is of an infinite quality. We cannot conceive the possibility of limits to the will. Observe on the other hand, how exceedingly limited is his power of acting, compared with the nature of his will. Suppose the power equal to the will, and man would be a God. He would will himself eternal, and be so. He could will a creation, and could make it. In this progressive reasoning, we see in the nature of the will of man, half of that which we conceive of thinking of God; add the other half, and we have the whole idea of a being who could make the universe, and sustain it by perpetual motion; because he could create that motion.

We know nothing of the capacity of the will of animals, but we know a great deal of the difference of their powers. For example, how numerous are their degrees, and how immense is the difference of power from a mite to a man. Since then everything we see below us shows a progression of power, where is the difficulty in supposing that there is, at the *summit of all things*, a Being in whom an infinity of power unites with the infinity of the will. When this simple idea presents itself to our mind, we have the idea of a perfect Being that man calls God.

It is comfortable to live under the belief of the existence of an infinitely protecting power; and it is an addition to that comfort to know that such a belief is not a mere conceit of the imagination, as many of the theories that are called religious are; nor a belief founded only on tradition or received opinion, but is a belief deducible by the action of reason upon the things that compose the system of the universe: a belief arising out of visible facts: and so demonstrable is the truth of this belief, that if no such belief had existed, the persons who now controvert it would have been the persons who would have produced and propagated it, because, by beginning to reason, they would have been led on to reason progressively to the end, and, thereby, have discovered that matter and all the properties it has, will not account for the system of the universe, and that there must necessarily be a superior cause.

It was the excess to which imaginary systems of religion had been carried, and the intolerance, persecutions, burnings

and massacres, they occasioned, that first induced certain persons to propagate infidelity; thinking, that upon the whole, it was better not to believe at all, than to believe a multitude of things and complicated creeds, that occasioned so much mischief in the world. But those days are past: persecution has ceased, and the antidote then set up against it has no longer even the shadow of an apology. We profess, and we proclaim in peace, the pure, unmixed, comfortable, and rational belief of a God, as manifested to us in the universe. We do this without any apprehension of that belief being made a cause of persecution as other beliefs have been, or of suffering persecution ourselves. To God, and not to man, are all men to account for their belief.

It has been well observed at the first institution of this society that the dogmas it professes to believe, are from the commencement of the world; that they are not novelties, but are confessedly the basis of all systems of religion, however numerous and contradictory they may be All men in the outset of the religion they profess are Theophilanthropists. It is impossible to form any system of religion without building upon those principles, and, therefore, they are not sectarian principles, unless we suppose a sect composed of all the world.

I have said in the course of this discourse, that the study of natural philosophy is a divine study, because it is the study of the works of God in the Creation. If we consider theology upon this ground, what an extensive field of improvement in things both divine and human opens itself before us. All the principles of science are of divine origin. It was not man that invented the principles on which astronomy, and every branch of mathematics are founded and studied. It was not man that gave properties of the circle and triangle. Those principles are eternal and immutable. We see in them the unchangeable nature of the Divinity. We see in them immortality, an immortality existing after the material figures that express those properties are dissolved in dust.

The society is at present in its infancy, and its means are small; but I wish to hold in view the subject I allude to, and instead of teaching the philosophical branches of learning as ornamental accomplishments only, as they have hitherto been taught, to teach them in a manner that shall combine theological knowledge with scientific instruction; to do this to the best advantage, some instruments will be necessary for the purpose of explanation, of which the society is not yet possessed. But as

the views of the society extend to public good, as well as to that of the individual, and as its principles can have no enemies, means may be devised to procure them.

If we unite to the present instruction, a series of lectures on the ground I have mentioned, we shall, in the first place render theology the most delightful and entertaining of all studies. In the next place we shall give scientific instruction to those who could not otherwise obtain it. The mechanic of every profession will there be taught the mathematical principles necessary to render him a proficient in his art. The cultivator will there see developed the principles of vegetation: while, at the same time, they will be led to see the hand of God in all these things.

REMARKS ON

ROBERT HALL'S SERMONS.

ROBERT HALL, a protestant minister in England, preached and published a sermon against what he calls "*Modern Infidelity.*" A copy of it was sent to a gentleman in America, with a request for his opinion thereon. That gentleman sent it to a friend of his in New York, with the request written on the cover—and this last sent it to Thomas Paine, who wrote the following observations on the blank leaf at the end of the sermon:—

The preacher of the foregoing sermon speaks a great deal about *infidelity*, but does not define what he means by it. His harangue is a general exclamation. Every thing, I suppose, that is not in his creed is infidelity with him, and his creed is infidelity with me. Infidelity is believing falsely. If what christians believe is not true, it is the christians that are the infidels.

The point between deists and christians is not about doctrine, but about facts—for if the things believed by the christians to be facts, are not facts, the doctrine founded thereon falls of itself. There is such a book as the Bible, but is it a fact that the Bible is *revealed religion?* The christians cannot prove it is. They put tradition in place of evidence, and tradition is not proof. If it were, the reality of witches could be proved by the same kind of evidence.

The bible is a history of the times of which it speaks, and history is not revelation. The obscene and vulgar stories in the bible are as repugnant to our ideas of the purity of a divine being, as the horrid cruelties and murders it ascribes to him are repugnant to our ideas of his justice. It is the reverence of the *Deists* for the attributes of the DEITY that causes them to reject the bible.

Is the account which the christian church gives of the person called Jesus Christ a fact or a fable? Is it a fact that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? The christians cannot prove

it, for the case does not admit of proof. The things called miracles in the bible, such, for instance, as raising the dead, admitted, *if true*, of ocular demonstration, but the story of the conception of Jesus Christ in the womb is a case beyond miracle, for it did not admit of demonstration. Mary, the reputed mother of Jesus, who must be supposed to know best, never said so herself, and all the evidence of it is, that the book of Matthew says, that Joseph dreamed an angel told him so. Had an old maid of two or three hundred years of age, brought forth a child, it would have been much better presumptive evidence of a supernatural conception, than Matthew's story of Joseph's dream about his young wife.

Is it a fact that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, and how is it proved? If a God he could not die, and as a man he could not redeem, how then is this redemption proved to be fact? It is said that Adam eat of the forbidden fruit, commonly called an apple, and thereby subjected himself and all his posterity for ever to eternal damnation. This is worse than visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the *third and fourth generations*. But how was the death of Jesus Christ to affect or alter the case?—Did God thirst for blood? If so, would it not have been better to have crucified Adam at once upon the forbidden tree, and made a new man? Would not this have been more creator-like than repairing the old one? Or, did God, when he made Adam, supposing the story to be true, exclude himself from the right of making another? Or impose on himself the necessity of breeding from the old stock? Priests should first prove facts, and deduce doctrines from them afterwards. But, instead of this they assume everything and prove nothing. Authorities drawn from the bible are no more than authorities drawn from other books, unless it can be proved that the bible is revelation.

This story of the redemption will not stand examination. That man should redeem himself from the sin of eating an apple, by commiting a murder on Jesus Christ, is the strangest system of religion ever set up. Deism is perfect purity compared with this. It is an established principle with the quakers not to shed blood—suppose, then, all Jerusalem had been quakers when Christ lived, there would have been nobody to crucify him, and in that case if man is redeemed by his blood, which is the belief of the church, there could have been no redemption—and the people of Jerusalem must all have been damned, because they

were too good to commit murder. The christian system of religion is an outrage on common sense. Why is man afraid to think?

Why do not the christians, to be consistent, make saints of Judas and Pontius Pilate, for they were the persons who accomplished the act of salvation. The merit of a sacrifice, if there can be any merit in it, was never in the thing sacrificed, but in the persons offering up the sacrifice—and, therefore, Judas and Pontius Pilate ought to stand first on the calendar of saints.

THOMAS PAINE.

OF THE WORD RELIGION,

AND OTHER WORDS OF UNCERTAIN SIGNIFICATION.

THE word religion is a word of forced application when used with respect to the worship of God. The root of the word is the latin verb *ligo*, to tie or bind. From *ligo* comes *religo*, to tie or bind over again, or make more fast—from *religo* comes substantive *religio*, which, with the addition of *n* makes the English substantive religion. The French use the word properly —when a woman enters a convent she is called a *noviciat*, that is, she is upon trial or probation. When she takes the oath, she called a *religieuse*, that is, she is tied or bound by that oath to the performance of it. We use the word in the same kind of sense when we say we will religiously perform the promise that we make.

But the word, without referring to its etymology, has, in the manner it is used, no definitive meaning, because it does not designate what religion a man is of. There is the religion of the Chinese, of the Tartars, of the Bramins, of the Persians, of the Jews, of the Turks, etc.

The word Christianity is equally as vague as the word religion. No two sectaries can agree what it is. It is a *lo here* and *lo there*. The two principal sectaries, Papists and Protestants, have often cut each other's throats about it:—The Papists call the Protestants heretics, and the Protestants call the Papists idolators. The minor sectaries have shown the same spirit of rancor, but, as the civil law restrains them from blood, they content themselves with preaching damnation against each other.

The word *protestant* has a positive signification in the sense it is used. It means protesting against the authority of the Pope, and this is the only article in which the protestants agree. —In every other sense, with respect to religion, the word protestant is as vague as the word christian. When we say an episcopalian, a presbyterian, a baptist, a quaker, we know what those persons are and what tenets they hold—but when we say a christian, we know he is not a Jew nor a Mahometan, but we know not if he be a trinitarian or an anti-trinitarian, or a be-

liever in what is called the immaculate conception, or a disbeliever, a man of seven sacraments, or of two sacraments, or of none. The word christian describes what a man is not, but not what he is.

The word *Theology*, from *Theos*, the Greek word for God, and meaning the study and knowledge ef God, is a word, that strictly speaking, belongs to Theists or Deists, and not to the christians. The head of the christian church is the person called Christ—but the head of the church of the Theists or Deists, as they are more commonly called, from *Deus*, the latin word for God, is God himself, and therefore the word Theology belongs to that church which has Theos, or God, for its head, and not to the Christian church which has the person called Christ for its head. Their technical word is *Christianity*, and they cannot agree what Christianity is.

The words *revealed religion*, and *natural religion*, require also explanation. They are both invented terms, contrived by the church for the support of priestcraft. With respect to the first, there is no evidence of any such thing, except in the universal revelation that God has made of his power, his wisdom, his goodness, in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of creation. We have no cause or ground from any thing we behold in those works, to suppose God would deal partially by mankind, and reveal knowledge to one nation and withhold it from another, and then damn them for not knowing it. The sun shines an equal quantity of light all over the world—and mankind in all ages and countries are endued with reason, and blessed with sight, to read the visible works of God in the creation, and so intelligent is this book that *he that runs may read.* We admire the wisdom of the ancients, yet they had no bibles, nor books, called revelation. They cultivated the reason that God gave them, studied him in his works, and arose to eminence.

As to the Bible, whether true or fabulous, it is a history, and history is not revelation. If Solomon had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, and if Samson slept in Delilah's lap, and she cut his hair off, the relation of those things is mere history, that needed no revelation from heaven to tell it; neither does it need any revelation to tell us that Samson was a fool for his pains, and Solomon too.

As to the expressions so often used in the Bible, that *the word of the Lord* came to such an one, or such an one, it was

the fashion of speaking in those times, like the expression used by a Quaker, that the *spirit moveth him*, or that used by priests, that they *have a call.* We ought not to be deceived by phrases because they are ancient. But if we admit the supposition that God would condescend to reveal himself in words we ought not to believe it would be in such idle and profligate stories as are in the Bible, and it is for this reason, among others which our reverence to God inspires, that the Deists deny that the book called the Bible is the word of God, or that it is revealed religion.

With respect to the term *natural religion*, it is, upon the face of it, the opposite of artificial religion, and it is impossible for any man to be certain that what is called *revealed religion* is not artificial. Man has the power of making books, inventing stories of God, and calling them revelation, or the word of God. The Koran exists as an instance that this can be done, and we must be credulous indeed to suppose that this is the only instance, and Mahomet the only impostor. The Jews could match him, and the church of Rome could overmatch the Jews. The Mahometans believe the Koran, the Christians believe the Bible, and it is education makes all the difference.

Books, whether Bibles or Korans, carry no evidence of being the work of any other power than man. It is only that which man cannot do that carries the evidence of being the work of a superior power. Man could not invent and make a universe—he could not invent nature, for nature is of divine origin. It is the laws by which the universe is governed. When, therefore, we look through nature up to nature's God, we are in the right road of happiness, but when we trust to books as the word of God, and confide in them as revealed religion, we are afloat on the ocean of uncertainty, and shatter into contending factions. The term, therefore, *natural religion*, explains itself to be *divine religion*, and the term *revealed religion* involves in it the suspicion of being *artificial.*

To show the necessity of understanding the meaning of words, I will mention an instance of a minister, I believe of the Episcopalian church of Newark, in Jersey. He wrote and published a book, and entitled it, "*An Antidote to Deism.*" An antidote to *Deism* must be *Atheism.* It has no other antidote—for what can be an antidote to the belief of a God, but the disbelief of God. Under the tuition of such pastors, what but ignorance and false information can be expected. T. P.

OF CAIN AND ABEL.

THE story of Cain and Abel is told in the fourth chapter of Genesis; Cain was the elder brother, and Abel the younger, and Cain killed Abel. The Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, and the Jewish story, in Genesis, of Cain and Abel, have the appearance of being the same story differently told, and that it came originally from Egypt.

In the Egyptian story, Typhon and Osiris are brothers; Typhon is the elder, and Osiris the younger, and Typhon kills Osiris. The story is an allegory on darkness and light; Typhon, the elder brother, is darkness, because darkness was supposed to be more ancient than light; Osiris is the good light who rules during the summer months, and brings forth the fruits of the earth, and is the favorite, as Abel is said to have been, for which Typhon hates him; and when the winter comes, and cold and darkness overspread the earth, Typhon is represented as having killed Osiris out of malice, as Cain is said to have killed Abel.

The two stories are alike in their circumstances and their event, and are probably but the same story; what corroborates this opinion is that the fifth chapter of Genesis historically contradicts the reality of the story of Cain and Abel in the fourth chapter, for though the name of *Seth*, a son of Adam, is mentioned in the fourth chapter, he is spoken of in the fifth chapter as if he was the first born of Adam. The chapter begins thus:—

"This is the book of the *generations* of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created he him. Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son, in his own likeness and after his own image, and called his name *Seth*." The rest of the chapter goes on with the genealogy.

Anybody reading this chapter, cannot suppose there were any sons born before *Seth*. The chapter begins with what is

called *the creation of Adam*, and calls itself the book of the *generations of Adam*, yet no mention is made of such persons as Cain and Abel; one thing, however, is evident on the face of these two chapters, which is, that the same person is not the writer of both; the most blundering historian could not have committed himself in such a manner.

Though I look on everything in the first ten chapters of Genesis to be fiction, yet fiction historically told should be consistent, whereas these two chapters are not. The Cain and Abel of Genesis appear to be no other than the ancient Egyptian story of Typhon and Osiris, the darkness and the light, which answered very well as an allegory without being believed as a fact.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

THE story of the tower of Babel is told in the eleventh chapter of Genesis. It begins thus:—"And the whole earth (it was but a very little part of it they knew) was of one language and of one speech.—And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.—And they said one to another, *Go to*, let us make brick and burn them thoroughly, and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.—And they said, *go to*, let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.—And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded.—And the Lord said, behold the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.—*Go to*, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.—So (that is, by that means) the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city."

This is the story, and a very foolish inconsistent story it is. In the first place, the familiar and irreverent manner in which the Almighty is spoken of in this chapter, is offensive to a serious mind. As to the project of building a tower whose top should reach to heaven, there never could be a people so foolish as to have such a notion; but to represent the Almighty as jealous of the attempt, as the writer of the story has done, is adding profanation to folly. "*Go to*," say the builders, "let us build us a tower whose top shall reach to heaven." "*Go to*," says God, "let us go down and confound their language." This quaintness is indecent, and the reason given for it is worse, for, "now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." This is representing the Almighty as jealous of their getting into heaven. The story is too ridiculous, even as a fable,

to account for the diversity of languages in the world, for which it seems to have been intended.

As to the project of confounding their language for the purpose of making them separate, it is altogether inconsistent; because, instead of producing this effect, it would, by increasing their difficulties, render them more necessary to each other, and cause them to keep together. Where could they go to better themselves?

Another observation upon this story is, the inconsistency of it with respect to the opinion that the Bible is the word of God given for the information of nankind; for nothing could so effectually prevent such a word being known by mankind as confounding their language. The people, who after this spoke different languages, could no more understand such a word generally, than the builders of Babel could understand one another. It would have been necessary, therefore, had such word ever been given or intended to be given, that the whole earth should be, as they say it was at first, of one language and of one speech, and that it should never have been confounded.

The case, however, is, that the Bible will not bear examination in any part of it, which it would do if it was the word of God. Those who most believe it are those who know least about it, and priests always take care to keep the inconsistent and contradictory parts out of sight.

T. P.

OF THE RELIGION OF DEISM

COMPARED WITH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE FORMER OVER THE LATTER.

EVERY person, of whatever religious denomination he may be, is a DEIST in the first article of his creed. Deism, from the Latin word *Deus*, God, is the belief of a God, and this belief is the first article of every man's creed.

It is on this article, universally consented to by all mankind, that the Deist builds his church, and here he rests. Whenever we step aside from this article, by mixing it with articles of human invention, we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty and fable, and become exposed to every kind of imposition by pretenders to revelation. The Persian shows the *Zendavesta* of Zoroaster, the law-giver of Persia, and calls it the divine law; the Bramin shows the *Shaster*, revealed, he says, by God to Brama, and given to him out of a cloud; the Jew shows what he calls the law of Moses, given, he says, by God, on the Mount Sinai; the Christian shows a collection of books and epistles, written by nobody knows who, and called the New Testament; and the Mahometan shows the Koran, given, he says, by God to Mahomet: each of these calls itself *revealed religion*, and the *only* true word of God, and this the followers of each profess to believe from the habit of education, and each believes the others are imposed upon.

But when the divine gift of reason begins to expand itself in the mind and calls man to reflection, he then reads and contemplates God in his works, and not in the books pretending to be revelation. The Creation is the Bible of the true believer in God. Everything in this vast volume inspires him with sublime ideas of the Creator. The little and paltry, and often obscene, tales of the bible sink into wretchedness when put in comparison with this mighty work. The Deist needs none of those tricks and shows called miracles to confirm his

faith, for what can be a greater miracle than the creation itself, and his own existence.

There is a happiness in Deism, when rightly understood, that is not to be found in any other system of religion. All other systems have some things in them that either shock our reason, or are repugnant to it, and man, if he thinks at all, must stifle his reason in order to force himself to believe them. But in Deism our reason and our belief become happily united. The wonderful structure of the universe, and every thing we behold in the system of the creation, prove to us, far better than books can do, the existence of a God, and at the same time proclaim his attributes. It is by the exercise of our reason that we are enabled to contemplate God in his works, and imitate him in his ways. When we see his care and goodness extended over all his creatures, it teaches us our duty towards each other, while it calls forth our gratitude to him. It is by forgetting God in his works, and running after the books of pretended revelation that man has wandered from the straight path of duty and happiness, and become by turns the victim of doubt and the dupe of delusion.

Except in the first article in the Christian creed, that of believing in God, there is not an article in it but fills the mind with doubt, as to the truth of it, the instant man begins to think. Now every article in a creed that is necessary to the happiness and salvation of man, ought to be as evident to the reason and comprehension of man as the first article is, for God has not given us reason for the purpose of confounding us, but that we should use it for our own happiness and his glory.

The truth of the first article is proved by God himself, and is universal; for *the creation is of itself demonstration of the existence of a Creator.* But the second article, that of God's begetting a son, is not proved in like manner, and stands on no other authority than that of a tale. Certain books in what is called the New Testament tell us that Joseph dreamed that the angel told him so. (Matthew, chap. 1, ver. 20). "And behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." The evidence upon this article bears no comparison with the evidence upon the first article, and, therefore is not entitled to the same credit, and ought not to be made an article in a creed, because the evidence of it is defective, and

what evidence there is, is doubtful and suspicious. We do not believe the first article on the authority of books, whether called Bibles or Korans, nor yet on the visionary authority of dreams, but on the authority of God's own visible works in the creation. The nations who never heard of such books, nor of such people as Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, believe the existence of a God as fully as we do, because it is self-evident. The work of man's hands is a proof of the existence of man as fully as his personal appearance would be. When we see a watch, we have as positive evidence of the existence of a watch-maker, as if we saw him; and in like manner the creation is evidence to our reason and our senses of the existence of a Creator. But there is nothing in the works of God that is evidence that he begat a son, nor any thing in the system of creation that corroborates such an idea, and, therefore, we are not authorized in believing it.

But presumption can assume anything, and therefore it makes Joseph's dream to be of equal authority with the existence of God, and to help it on calls it revelation. It is impossible for the mind of man in its serious moments, however it may have been entangled by education, or beset by priest-craft, not to stand still and doubt upon the truth of this article and of its creed. But this is not all.

The second article of the Christian creed having brought the son of Mary into the world (and this Mary, according to the chronological tables, was a girl of only fifteen years of age when this son was born), the next article goes on to account for his being begotten, which was, that when he grew a man he should be put to death, to expiate, they say, the sin that Adam brought into the world by eating an apple or some kind of forbidden fruit.

But though this is the creed of the Church of Rome, from whence the protestants borrowed it, it is a creed which that church has manufactured of itself, for it is not contained in, nor derived from, the book called the New Testament. The four books called the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which give, or pretend to give, the birth, sayings, life, preaching and death of Jesus Christ, make no mention of what is called the fall of man; nor is the name of Adam to be found in any of those books, which it certainly would be if the writers of them believed that Jesus was begotten, born, and died for the purpose of redeeming mankind from the sin

which Adam had brought into the world. Jesus never speaks of Adam himself, of the Garden of Eden, nor of what is called the fall of man.

But the Church of Rome having set up its new religion which it called Christianity, and invented the creed which it named the apostle's creed, in which it calls Jesus the *only son of God, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary*—things of which it is impossible that man or woman can have any idea, and consequently no belief but in words, and for which there is no authority but the idle story of Joseph's dream in the first chapter of Matthew, which any designing impostor or foolish fanatic might make. It then manufactured the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, and the allegorical tree of life and the tree of knowledge into real trees, contrary to the belief of the first christians, and for which there is not the least authority in any of the books of the New Testament; for in none of them is there any mention made of such place as the Garden of Eden, nor of any thing that is said to have happened there.

But the Church of Rome could not erect the person called Jesus into a Saviour of the world without making the allegories in the book of Genesis into fact, though the New Testament, as before observed, gives not authority for it. All at once the allegorical tree of knowledge became, according to the church, a real tree, the fruit of it real fruit, and the eating of it sinful. As priestcraft was always the enemy of knowledge, because priestcraft supports itself by keeping people in delusion and ignorance, it was consistent with its policy to make the acquisition of knowledge a real sin.

The Church of Rome having done this, it then brings forward Jesus the son of Mary as suffering death to redeem mankind from sin, which Adam, it says, had brought into the world by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But as it is impossible for reason to believe such a story, because it can see no reason for it, nor have any evidence of it, the church then tells us we must not regard our reason, but must *believe*, as it were, and that through thick and thin, as if God had given man reason like a plaything, or a rattle, on purpose to make fun of him. Reason is the forbidden tree of priestcraft, and may serve to explain the allegory of the forbidden tree of knowledge, for we may reasonably suppose the allegory had some meaning and application at the time it was invented. It

was the practice of the eastern nations to convey their meaning by allegory, and relate it in the manner of fact. Jesus followed the same method, yet nobody ever supposed the allegory or parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the prodigal son, the ten virgins, &c., were facts. Why then should the tree of knowledge, which is far more romantic in idea than the parables in the New Testament are, be supposed to be a real tree.* The answer to this is, because the church could not make its new fangled system, which it called Christianity, hold together without it. To have made Christ to die on account of an allegorical tree would have been too bare-faced a fable.

But the account, as it is given of Jesus in the New Testament, even visionary as it is, does not support the creed of the church that he died for the redemption of the world. According to that account he was crucified and buried on the Friday, and rose again in good health on the Sunday morning, for we do not hear that he was sick. This cannot be called dying, and is rather making fun of death than suffering it. There are thousands of men and women also, who if they could know they should come back again in good health in about thirty-six hours, would prefer such kind of death for the sake of experiment, and to know what the other side of the grave was. Why then should that which would be only a voyage of curious amusement to us be magnified into merit and suffering in him? If a God he could not suffer death, for immortality cannot die, and as a man his death could be no more than the death of any other person.

The belief of the redemption of Jesus Christ is altogether an invention of the Church of Rome, not the doctrine of the New Testament. What the writers of the New Testament attempted to prove by the story of Jesus is the *resurrection of the same body from the grave*, which was the belief of the Pharisees, in opposition to the Sadducees (a sect of Jews), who denied it. Paul, who was brought up a Pharisee, labors hard at this point, for it was the creed of his own Pharisaical church. The 15th chap. of I. Corinthians is full of supposed cases and assertions about the resurrection of the same body, but there is not a word in it about redemption. This chapter makes part of the

* The remark of the Emperor Julian, on the story of The Tree of Knowledge, is worth observing. "If," said he, "there ever had been, or could be, a Tree of Knowledge, instead of God forbidding man to eat thereof, it would be that of which he would order him to eat the most."

funeral service of the Episcopal church. The dogma of the redemption is the fable of priestcraft invented since the time the New Testament was compiled, and the agreeable delusion of it suited with the depravity of immoral livers. When men are taught to ascribe all their crimes and vices to the temptations of the Devil, and to believe that Jesus, by his death, rubs all off and pays their passage to heaven gratis, they become as careless in morals as a spendthrift would be of money, were he told that his father had engaged to pay off all his scores. It is a doctrine, not only dangerous to morals in this world, but to our happiness in the next world, because it holds out such a cheap, easy, and lazy way of getting to heaven as has a tendency to induce men to hug the delusion of it to their own injury.

But there are times when men have serious thoughts, and it is at such times, when they begin to think, that they begin to doubt the truth of the Christian Religion, and well they may, for it is too fanciful and too full of conjecture, inconsistency, improbability, and irrationality, to afford consolation to the thoughtful man. His reason revolts against his creed. He sees that none of its articles are proved, or can be proved. He may believe that such a person as is called Jesus (for Christ was not his name) was born and grew to be a man, because it is no more than a natural and probable case. But who is to prove he is the son of God, that he was begotten by the Holy Ghost? Of these things there can be no proof, and that which admits not of proof and is against the laws of probability, and the order of nature which God himself has established, is not an object for belief. God has not given man reason to embarrass him, but to prove his being imposed upon.

He may believe that Jesus was crucified, because many others were crucified, but who is to prove he was crucified *for the sins of the world?* This article has no evidence, not even in the New Testament; and if it had, where is the proof that the New Testament, in relating things neither probable nor proveable, is to be believed as true? When an article in a creed does not admit of proof nor of probability, the salve is to call it revelation; but this is only putting one difficulty in the place of another, for it is as impossible to prove a thing to be revelation as it is to prove that Mary was gotten with child by the Holy Ghost.

Here it is that the religion of Deism is superior to the Christian religion. It is free from all those invented and torturing

articles that shock our reason or injure our humanity, and with which the Christian religion abounds. Its creed is pure and sublimely simple. It believes in God and there it rests. It honors reason as the choicest gift of God to man, and the faculty by which he is enabled to contemplate the power, wisdom and goodness of the Creator displayed in the creation; and reposing itself on his protection, both here and hereafter, it avoids all presumptuous belief, and rejects, as the fabulous inventions of men, all books pretending to revelation.

T P.

LETTER TO SAMUEL ADAMS.

My Dear and Venerable Friend,

I received with great pleasure your friendly and affectionate letter of Nov. 30th, and I thank you also for the frankness of it. Between men in pursuit of truth, and whose object is the happiness of man both here and hereafter, there ought to be no reserve. Even error has a claim to indulgence, if not to respect, when it is believed to be truth. I am obliged to you for your affectionate remembrance of what you style my services in awakening the public mind to a declaration of independence, and supporting it after it was declared. I also, like you, have often looked back on those times, and have thought, that if independence had not been declared at the time it was, the public mind could not have been brought up to it afterwards. It will immediately occur to you, who were so intimately acquainted with the situation of things at that time, that I allude to the black times of *seventy-six;* for though I know, and you my friend also know, they were no other than the natural consequences of the military blunders of that campaign, the country might have viewed them as proceeding from a natural inability to support its cause against the enemy, and have sunk under the despondency of that misconceived idea. This was the impression against which it was necessary the country should be strongly animated.

I now come to the second part of your letter, on which I shall be as frank with you as you are with me. "But (say you) when I *heard* you had turned your mind to a defence of *infidelity*, I felt myself much astonished," &c. What, my good friend, do you call believing in God *infidelity?* for that is the great point mentioned in the "Age of Reason" against all divided beliefs and *allegorical* divinities. The Bishop of Llandaff (Dr. Watson) not only acknowledges this, but pays me some compliments upon it, in his answer to the second part of that work.

"There is (says he) a philosophical sublimity in some of your ideas, when speaking of the Creator of the Universe."

What then (my much esteemed friend, for I do not respect you the less because we differ, and that perhaps not much, in religious sentiments), what, I ask, is the thing called *infidelity*? If we go back to your ancestors and mine, three or four hundred years ago, for we must have fathers and grandfathers or we should not have been here, we shall find them praying to saints and virgins, and believing in purgatory and transubstantiation; and therefore, all of us are infidels according to our forefather's belief. If we go back to times more ancient we shall again be infidels according to the belief of some other forefathers.

The case, my friend, is, that the world has been overrun with fable and creed of human invention, with sectaries of whole nations against other nations, and sectaries of those sectaries in each of them against each other. Every sectary, except the Quakers, have been persecutors. Those who fled from persecution, persecuted in their turn, and it is this confusion of creeds that has filled the world with persecution, and deluged it with blood. Even the depredation on your commerce by the Barbary powers, sprang from the crusades of the church against those powers. It was a war of creed against creed, each boasting of God for its author, and reviling each other with the name of infidel. If I do not believe as you believe, it proves that you do not believe as I believe, and this is all that it proves.

There is, however, one point of union wherein all religions meet, and that is in the first article of every man's creed, and of every nation's creed, that has any creed at all, *I believe in God.* Those who rest here, and there are millions who do, cannot be wrong as far as their creed goes. Those who choose to go further *may be wrong*, for it is impossible that all can be right, since there is so much contradiction among them. The first, therefore, are, in my opinion, on the safest side.

I presume you are so far acquainted with ecclesiastical history as to know, and the bishop who has answered me has been obliged to acknowledge the fact, that the Books that compose the New Testament, were voted by *yeas* and *nays* to be the Word of God, as you now vote a law, by the Popish Council of Nice and Laodicea, about fourteen hundred and fifty years ago. With respect to the fact there is no dispute, neither do I mention it for the sake of controversy. This vote may appear authority enough to some and not authority enough to

others. It is proper, however, that everybody should know the fact.

With respect to the "Age of Reason," which you so much condemn, and that, I believe, without having read it, for you say only that you *heard* of it, I will inform you of a circumstance, because you cannot know it by other means.

I have said in the first page of the first part of that work, that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion, but that I had reserved it to a later time of life. I have now to inform you why I wrote it, and published it at the time I did.

In the first place, I saw my life in continual danger. My friends were falling as fast as the guillotine could cut their heads off, and as I expected every day the same fate, I resolved to begin my work. I appeared to myself to be on my death bed, for death was on every side of me, and I had no time to lose. This accounts for my writing at the time I did, and so nicely did the time and intention meet, that I had not finished the first part of the work more than six hours before I was arrested and taken to prison. Joel Barlow was with me, and knows the fact.

In the second place, the people of France were running headlong into atheism, and I had the work translated and published in their own language, to stop them in that career, and fix them to the first article (as I have before said) of every man's creed, who has any creed at all, *I believe in God.* I endangered my own life, in the first place, by opposing in the Convention the executing of the king, and laboring to show they were trying the monarch and not the man, and that the crimes imputed to him were the crimes of the monarchical system; and endangered it a second time by opposing atheism, and yet *some* of your priests, for I do not believe that all are perverse, cry out, in the *war-whoop* of monarchical priestcraft, what an infidel! what a wicked man is Thomas Paine! They might as well add, for he believes in God, and is against shedding blood.

But all this *war-whoop* of the pulpit has some concealed object. Religion is not the cause, but is the stalking-horse. They put it forward to conceal themselves behind it. It is not a secret that there has been a party composed of the leaders of the Federalists, for I do not include all Federalists with their leaders, who have been working by various means for several years past, to overturn the Federal Constitution established on

the representative system, and place government in the new world on the corrupt system of the old. To accomplish this a large standing army was necessary, and as a pretence for such an army, the danger of a foreign invasion must be bellowed forth from the pulpit, from the press, and by their public orators.

I am not of a disposition inclined to suspicion. It is in its nature a mean and cowardly passion, and upon the whole, even admitting error into the case, it is better, I am sure it is more generous, to be wrong on the side of confidence than on the side of suspicion. But I know as a fact, that the English Government distributes annually fifteen hundred pounds sterling among the Presbyterian ministers in England, and one hundred among those of Ireland;* and when I hear of the strange discourses of some of your ministers and professors of colleges I cannot, as the Quakers say, find freedom in my mind to acquit them. Their anti-revolutionary doctrines invite suspicion, even against one's will, and in spite of one's charity to believe well of them.

As you have given me one Scripture phrase, I wil give you another for those ministers. It is said in Exodus, chapter xxii. verse 28, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." But those ministers, such I mean as Dr. Emmons, curse ruler and people both, for the majority are, politically, the people, and it is those who have chosen the ruler whom they curse.

As to the first part of the verse, that of *not reviling the gods*, it makes no part of my Scripture: I have but one God.

Since I began this letter, for I write it by piecemeals as I have leisure, I have seen the four letters that passed between you and John Adams. In your first letter you say, "Let divines and philosophers, statesmen and patriots, unite their endeavors to *renovate the age*, by inculcating in the minds of youth *the fear and love of the Deity and universal philanthropy.*" Why, my dear friend, this is exactly *my* religion, and is the whole of it. That you may have an idea that the "Age of Reason" (for I believe you have not read it) inculcates this reverential fear and love of the Deity, I will give you a paragraph from it.

* There must undoubtedly be a very gross mistake in respect to the amount said to be expended; the sums intended to be expressed were probably fifteen hundred thousand, and one hundred thousand pounds.—EDITOR.

"Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful."

As I am fully with you in your first part, that respecting the Deity, so am I in your second, that of *universal philanthropy;* by which I do not mean merely the sentimental benevolence of wishing well, but the practical benevolence of doing good. We cannot serve the Deity in the manner we serve those who cannot do without that service. He needs no services from us. We can add nothing to eternity. But it is in our power to render a service *acceptable* to him, and that is, not by praying, but by endeavoring to make his creatures happy. A man does not serve God when he prays, for it is himself he is trying to serve; and as to hiring or paying men to pray, as if the Deity needed instruction, it is in my opinion an abomination. One good school-master is of more use and of more value than a load of such parsons as Dr. Emmons, and some others.

You, my dear and much respected friend, are now far in the vale of years; I have yet, I believe, some years in store, for I have a good state of health and a happy mind; I take care of both, by nourishing the first with temperance, and the latter with abundance.

This I believe you will allow to be the true philosophy of life. You will see by my third letter to the citizens of the United States, that I have been exposed to, and preserved through many dangers; but, instead of buffeting the Deity with prayers, as if I distrusted him, or must dictate to him, I reposed myself on his protection; and you, my friend, will find, even in your last moments, more consolation in the silence of resignation than in the murmuring wish of prayer.

In everything which you say in your second letter to John Adams, respecting our rights as men and citizens in this world, I am perfectly with you. On other points we have to answer to our Creator and not to each other. The key of heaven is not in the keeping of any sect, nor ought the road to it to be obstructed by any. Our relation to each other in this world

is, as men, and the man who is a friend to man and to his rights, let his religious opinions be what they may, is a good citizen, to whom I can give, as I ought to do, and as every other ought, the right hand of fellowship, and to none with more hearty good will, my dear friend, than to you.

THOMAS PAINE.

FEDERAL CITY, *Jan. 1, 1803.*

EXTRACT FROM A

LETTER TO ANDREW A. DEAN.*

RESPECTED FRIEND,

I RECEIVED your friendly letter, for which I am obliged to you. It is three weeks ago to-day (Sunday, Aug. 15), that I was struck with a fit of an apoplexy, that deprived me of all sense and motion. I had neither pulse nor breathing, and the people about me supposed me dead. I had felt exceedingly well that day, and had just taken a slice of bread and butter, for supper, and was going to bed. The fit took me on the the stairs, as suddenly as if I had been shot through the head; and I got so very much hurt by the fall, that I have not been able to get in and out of bed since that day, otherwise than being lifted out in a blanket, by two persons; yet all this while my mental faculties have remained as perfect as I ever enjoyed them. I consider the scene I have passed through as an experiment on dying, and I find that death has no terrors for me. As to the people called Christians, they have no evidence that their religion is true.† There is no more proof that the Bible is the word of God, than that the Koran of Mahomet is the word of God. It is education makes all the difference. Man, before he begins to think for himself, is as much the child of habit in *Creeds* as he is in ploughing and sowing. Yet creeds, like opinions, prove nothing.

Where is the evidence that the person called Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of God? The case admits not of evidence

* Mr. Dean rented Mr. Paine's farm at New Rochelle.

† Mr. Paine's entering upon the subject of religion on this occasion, it may be presumed, was occasioned by the following passage in Mr. Dean's letter to him, viz.:

"I have read with good attention your manuscript on dreams, and examination of the prophecies in the Bible. I am now searching the old prophecies, and comparing the same to those said to be quoted in the New Testament. I confess the comparison is a matter worthy of our serious attention; I know not the result till I finish; then if you be living, I shall communicate the same to you; I hope to be with you soon."

either to our senses or our mental faculties: neither has God given to man any talent by which such a thing is comprehensible. It cannot therefore be an object for faith to act upon, for faith is nothing more than an assent the mind gives to something it sees cause to believe is fact. But priests, preachers, and fanatics, put imagination in the place of faith, and it is the nature of the imagination to believe without evidence.

If Joseph the carpenter dreamed (as the book of Matthew, chap. 1st, says he did), that his betrothed wife, Mary, was with child, by the Holy Ghost, and that an angel told him so, I am not obliged to put faith in his dream, nor do I put any, for I put no faith in my own dreams, and I should be weak and foolish indeed to put faith in the dreams of others.

The Christian religion is derogatory to the Creator in all its articles. It puts the Creator in an inferior point of view, and places the Christian Devil above him. It is he, according to the absurd story in Genesis, that outwits the Creator in the garden of Eden, and steals from him his favorite creature, man, and, at last, obliges him to beget a son, and put that son to death, to get man back again, and this the priests of the Christian religion call redemption.

Christian authors exclaim against the practice of offering up human sacrifices, which, they say, is done in some countries; and those authors make those exclamations without ever reflecting that their own doctrine of salvation is founded on a human sacrifice. They are saved, they say, by the blood of Christ. The Christian religion begins with a dream and ends with a murder.

As I am now well enough to sit up some hours in the day, though not well enough to get up without help, I employ myself as I have always done, in endeavouring to bring man to the right use of the reason that God has given him, and to direct his mind immediately to his Creator, and not to fanciful secondary beings called mediators, as if God was superannuated or ferocious.

As to the book called the Bible, is it blasphemy to call it the word of God. It is a book of lies and contradiction, and a history of bad times and bad men. There is but a few good characters in the whole book. The fable of Christ and his twelve apostles, which is a parody on the sun and the twelve signs of Zodiac, copied from the ancient religions of the eastern world, is the least hurtful part. Everything told of Christ has reference to

the sun. His reported resurrection is at sunrise, and that on the first day of the week ; that is, on the day anciently dedicated to the sun, and from thence called Sunday ; in latin *Dies Solis*, the day of the sun ; as the next day, Monday, is Moonday. But there is no room in a letter to explain these things.

While man keeps to the belief of one God, his reason unites with his creed. He is not shocked with contradictions and horrid stories. His bible is the heavens and the earth. He beholds his Creator in all his works, and every thing he beholds inspires him with reverence and gratitude. From the goodness of God to all, he learns his duty to his fellow man, and stands self-reproved when he transgresses it. Such a man is no persecutor.

But when he multiplies his creed with imaginary things, of which he can have neither evidence nor conception, such as the tale of the garden of Eden, the talking serpent, the fall of man, the dreams of Joseph the carpenter, the pretended resurrection and ascension, of which there is even no historical relation, for no historian of those times mentions such a thing, he gets into the pathless region of confusion, and turns either frantic or hypocrite. He forces his mind, and pretends to believe what he does not believe. This is in general the case with the Methodists. Their religion is all creed and no morals.

I have now my friend given you a *fac smile* of my mind on the subject of religion and creeds, and my wish is, that you make this letter as publicly known as you find opportunities of doing.

Yours, in friendship,

THOMAS PAINE.

N. Y., *Aug. 1806.*

THE END.

A CRITICAL BOOK.

MODERN THINKERS,

—BY—

VAN BUREN DENSLOW, LL. D.,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

COL. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

12 Mo. Cloth, 384 Pages, Illustrated by Portraits of the Eight Great Thinkers, Price $1.50.

"Modern Thinkers; principally upon Social Science, What they think, and Why?" a series of critical essays, by Prof. V. B. Denslow, LL. D., upon Emanuel Swedenborg, and the Origin of the Christian ideas of Heaven, Hell and Virtue; Adam Smith, Founder of the School of the Economists; Jeremy Bentham, the Apostle of Law Reform, and of Utilitarianism in Morals; Thomas Paine, the Apostle of Chronic Revolution, in his relations to the Letters of Junius, Declaration of Independence, and Democracy in America; Charles Fourier, the Philosopher of Passional Harmony and Co-operative Association; Herbert Spencer, a Review of his Theories of Evolution and Morals; Ernst Haeckel, the Demonstrator of the Doctrine of Evolution; Auguste Compte, Founder of the Positive Philosophy and Pontiff of the "Religion of Humanity;" an essay on the Authorship of Junius, as a Sequel to the Critique on Thomas Paine, and one on Wealth as regarded by the Economists and by Christianity, as a Sequel to the Critique on Adam Smith.

The volume consists of 384 pp. 15mo, illustrated by portraits of each of the eight great thinkers, and opens with an introduction from the pen of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll.

EXTRACT FROM INTRODUCTION:

"If others who read this book get as much information as I did from the advan e sheets, they will feel repaid a hundred times. It is perfectly delightful to take advantage of the conscientious labors of those who go through and through volume after volume, divide with infinite patience the gold from the dross, and present us with the pure and shining coin. Such men may be likened to bees who save us numberless journeys by giving us the fruit of their own. * * * * * Written always in excellent and often in exquisite style. It is full of original thought not only, but it suggests thought."

BELFORD, CLARKE & CO., Publishers,

CHICAGO.

FOR SALE ON THESE CARS.

8506

Printed in the United States
15776LVS00001B/479

GOLDEN GATE SEMINARY LIBRARY

ISBN 0-7661-4546-8